

Calvinist Contact

A Reformed Weekly

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Fight intensifies for Christianity in Ontario's public schools

Robert VanderVennen

MISSISSAUGA — The struggle to keep parents' rights and Christianity in Ontario's public schools is growing more heated. Christian parents are upset with the provincial Ministry of Education's proposed amendments to the Education Act which will remove reference to parental rights, and with the ministry's action to remove Inter-Varsity's noon-time Bible study clubs.

A recent consultation called by the Coalition for Religious Freedom in Education, chaired by Aileen Van Ginkel, drew 100 people who peppered Keith Baird, policy adviser to the minister, with questions about why the ministry is moving as it is.

For example, the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which Canada has signed, says, "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their child." Last December the Minister of Education wrote, "The ultimate responsibility for making decisions regarding the implementation of educational programs rests with each board of education...in compliance with the Education Act and regulations."

Now the ministry wants to delete Section 50 from the Education Act. That section is apparently the only place in the act where parents' rights are mentioned. Section 50 now reads:

(1) Subject to the regulations, a pupil shall be allowed to receive such religious instruction as his parent or guardian desires, or where the pupil is an adult, as he desires.

(2) No pupil in a public school shall be required to read or study in or from a religious book, or to join in an exercise of devotion or religion objected to by his parents or guardian, or by the pupil, where he is an adult."

Under close questioning Baird said that courts have recently swept away those particular rights, so for the act to say that parents have certain rights that

Thinkbit:

"We will not tolerate a state-run press, a state-run church, or state-controlled speech. We should carefully consider on what basis we continue to insist on a state-run school monopoly."

From: a statement by the Association of Independent Schools and Colleges in Alberta.

they now do not have is misleading.

The coalition has proposed that Section 50 be amended to read, in part: "Subject to the regulations, a pupil shall be allowed to receive such education as his parent or guardian desires." That and everything else the coalition says will be considered, says Baird.

Who controls public schools? The feeling of the meeting was that parents don't have much to say, at least in the area of religion in the schools. Parents can't complain to their school board, nor by being elected to such boards will they have much influence. Parents can only complain to Queen's Park, for what that's worth.

The ministry goes further than the courts?

Some expressed the fear that the ministry has gone farther than necessary in shutting down Christian presence in schools in response to recent court decisions in favour of non-Christian minority students.

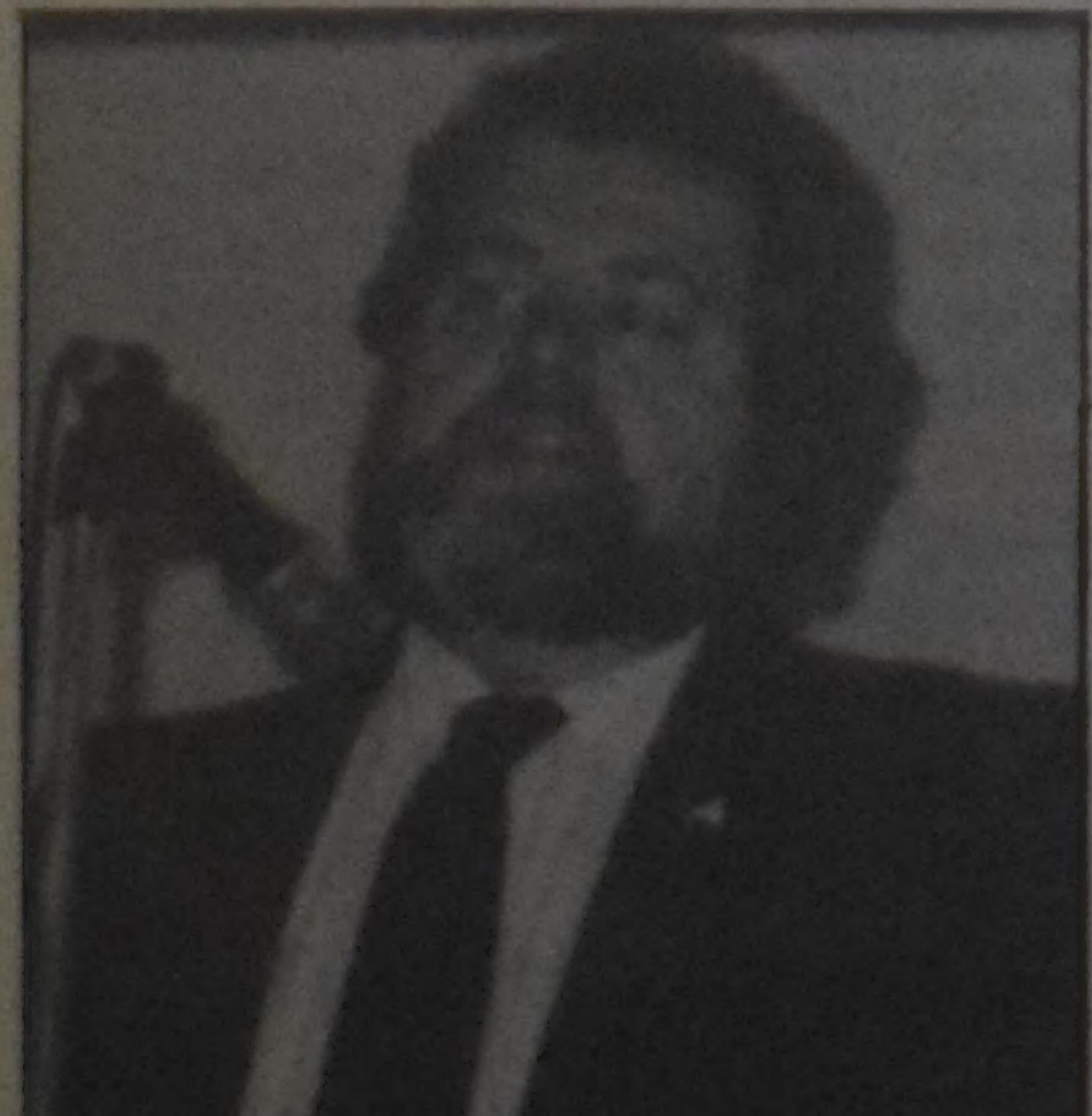
Constitutional lawyer Peter Jervis told the group that the ministry says lunchtime Bible study is not permitted, which he says goes beyond what the courts prohibited. For example, the April 1990 Ontario Court of Appeals decision which eliminated the religious education programs in Elgin County was not an adjudication of Section 50 and did not call for its removal from the Education Act, the coalition points out. He said that the ministry's wanting to remove all religion from public schools reminds one of practices in the Soviet Union in past decades. It goes beyond the American position, even though the American Constitution upholds the

See NO -- p. 2.

Remembrance Day 1991

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Robert VanderVennen

Keith Baird defends Ministry of Education policies on Christianity in Ontario's public schools.

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Dutch churches have undergone revolutionary changes, says sociologist



Photo: Stan de Jong

Dr. Gerard Dekker

Bert Witvoet

ST. CATHARINES, Ont — The *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands (GKN) have undergone such a tremendous change since 1950 that one may call it "a quiet revolution," says Gerard Dekker. *De Stille Revolutie* (the quiet revolution) is, in fact, the title of his next book, to be published in 1992.

Dekker, who is professor of sociology of religion at the Free University of Amsterdam, sees a growing chasm developing between the largest *Gereformeerde* church (GKN) and the six other *Gereformeerde* denominations in the Netherlands.

(For those readers not familiar with the Dutch church scene, it helps to explain that the two main Reformed groupings in the Netherlands are the state church called the *Hervormde Kerk* and the seven church groupings that, since the Secession of 1834, have come out of the main church. The latter are known as the *Gereformeerde* churches or the Secessionist churches. The two terms, *Hervormd* and *Gereformeerde*, both translate into "Reformed" in English; hence, the use of the Dutch terms or the word "Secessionist" to make the necessary distinctions.)

Liberalization process

The growing difference between the GKN and the other six Secessionist churches Dekker ascribes to the fact that the GKN is more in tune with Dutch society and has for that reason changed along with it. The GKN he classifies as "modern," whereas he puts the other six into the "pietistic" and "orthodox" categories.

Dutch society has seen a liberalization process which now expresses itself in a greater emphasis on equality, freedom and individualization. Because of a greater association with Dutch society, the GKN has left behind its earlier positions which tried to integrate faith and family, faith and marriage, faith and entertainment. They also have a

different understanding of the Bible — less literal and less fundamentalistic — according to Dekker. On the other hand, he calls the GKN's understanding of the Scriptures "relational."

The Reformed confessions are less important to people in the GKN, there is a greater pluralism in the church, as there is in society, and church attendance has sharply declined.

But Dekker also sees signs of revitalization in the GKN. There is a renewed interest in studying the Bible, he says.

Relation of society and faith

Dekker has made it his concern to study the various Secessionist groupings in the Netherlands. He co-authored a book called *Gereformeerden in Meervoud* (the Plurality of *Gereformeerde* Churches) — a study of the worldviews and values of the various Secessionist branches. His study examines the relation between society and religion and vice versa. He researched social factors such as gender, age, education, vocation and location that play a role in positions held by people on questions like the ordination of women. He also studied the impact of a person's faith on society or on issues.

Dekker's study found that people often underestimate the strong influence of social factors on their faith. One's peer group, family and school often have a stronger impact than the person's faith, he believes. "It's nicer to say that my faith determines who I am and what my family is," he says. "But is it really so?" At the same time he holds that faith is still a significant factor.

The middle position

Dekker was on a four-week tour of the United States and Canada, visiting Calvin College, Hope College, Calvinist Contact, Redeemer College and the Institute for Christian Studies. It's his curiosity about what is happening to the *Gereformeerden* in North America that brought him here.

He thinks that the Christian Reformed Church in Canada straddles the U.S.A. and Holland with respect to the influence of evangelicalism and Pietism. Only two per cent of the Dutch are evangelical, he says. In that sense an evangelical has a hard time identifying with Dutch culture and is not regarded as typically Dutch by that society. On the other hand, one can be an evangelical and feel thoroughly American, he says.

Canadian society is more secular than American society, he finds. As a result he thinks that the Canadian churches will be confronted with ethical problems before the U.S. churches will. He believes it's easier to keep the issue of homosexuals off the table in the U.S. than it is in Canada, for example.

Dekker acknowledges that all of these statements are just "impressions" he has gained and that he would have to be here much longer to form more firm opinions.

Like lovers uncertain of their beloved's reciprocal affections, the nation picked petals of the last blooming crysanthemums: will he or will he not? Finally Monsieur broke the tension and announced that he will not be a candidate for U.N. Secretary-General. Instead, the prime minister continued his contributions to the search for national unity with powerful speeches in Toronto and in Montreal. But now the rumours have shifted to Mrs. MacTeer's husband. It would be a nice reward for Mr. Clark. He deserves it.

★★★
Statistics Canada estimates that Canada's feline population amounts to about 25 million. That is one puss for every man, woman and child in the country. There must be a possibility for taxation in there somewhere. Wait till Revenue Canada finds out. A New York postal worker was no feline fan. The man was charged with killing as many as 80 cats.

★★★

Quebec's Minister of Health and Social Services has found a new way to getting into people's wallets: he wants the first \$2,000 of health care costs incurred reported as income. Could be a big one. Governments need money. Both health cost and welfare expenses are increasing rapidly, yet one in six children in our country lives in poverty.

★★★

Congratulations are in order for the House of Commons Consumers Affairs Committee which wants to know why Canada's banks haven't reduced interest rates for their credit card debtors and why department stores and other plastic issuers continue to commit loan-sharking usury with their customers who are in arrears. I hope the committee will kick some of these terminal capitalists in the fleshy parts of their anatomy.

★★★

The jury is still out on the question of economic consequences of an eventual

Quebec separation. The Economic Council thinks it will cost each Quebecois no more than about \$2,000 annually. Others say it will cost a bundle, as if \$1,800 per year is a sneeze in the Kleenex. Not too many people, and, bless 'm, our prime minister is an exception, speak about the emotional and psychological cost.

★★★

Only in Ottawa! When the Princess of Wales visited the city's newly finished Heart Institute, the hospital furnished the place with pseudo-patients. Maybe that hospital is too close to Parliament Hill. The question that remains: were the cardiologists real or were they hot dog vendors in borrowed white coats?

★★★

We're big on studies these days: a Harvard professor was paid \$1.2 million to tell us that our economy is too dependent on the sale of natural resources; and the Canadian Teachers Federation paid \$197,000 to

Pressreview

Carl D. Tuyl



The planned forced repatriation of Vietnamese boat people from the camps in Hong Kong is causing riots among the refugees, and some camp leaders have threatened with mass suicide.

★★★

People who are found not guilty of crimes by reason of insanity are placed in forensic wings of psychiatric hospitals where they often remain for undetermined periods under warrants of the Governor-General. The Supreme Court of Canada now has ordered the government to come up with a new criminal insanity law.

★★★

There's big trouble in the Alps: the girls yodel no more; Edelweiss refuses to bloom; the Swiss army bicycle troops are mourning the fact that they have to trade their 1905 model single-gear bikes for a current seven-gear model. Upsetting, that.

★★★

Well anyway, Uncle Sam's money dragged the Israeli delegation kicking and screaming to Madrid where they hassled everyone in sight about seating arrangements at the table, length of introductory speeches and a few more important details. A fact is that the enemies are talking, if not with each other then within earshot of each other. Money even talks peace. European Community foreign ministers threatened to impose economic sanctions on Serbia, Yugoslavia's dominant republic, if it does not accept a European plan.

★★★

Even sin is changing, at least according to a poll done in Italy. The poll showed that 40 per cent of the 2,000 interviewed people considered premarital sex, tax evasion and absenteeism from work to be no sin at all. And a certain Baptist minister, Rev. Lynn Toney, has no fear of heights. He married 26 couples aboard a Ferris wheel in Florida. Marriage has its ups and downs there right at the beginning.

★★★

Talk about accounts receivable: the United Nations is owed more than \$1 billion. Just this year, \$723.5 million in dues failed to come in, which has to be added to the backlog of \$333.6 million of previous years. The U.N. goes from shortage to shortage, just like the church. I bet, though, that delinquent payers do not fall silent in the discussions.

It may be said here that in the book-year which finished at the end of the summer for the Christian Reformed Church, income was well within expectations. No, I don't count the money, but I have my sources. My sources even reveal to me the exact amount the participants in the recent World Series received. The members of the winning Minnesota Twins got \$119,593 each while the Atlanta team members got \$73,331.

★★★

I finish with two sayings ascribed to Cardinal Newman. The first one: "I do not fear to die, I fear not having begun to live. The second one: To live is to change, to live perfectly is to change often."

Carl D. Tuyl is a member of the Ontario Provincial Interfaith Committee on Chaplaincy and a chaplaincy co-ordinator in Canada for the Christian Reformed Churches.



Jan Van Harmelen

The Lord took John Van Harmelen home on October 25. In Dutch we would describe his death as *een overlijden*: the Lord has taken him "to the other side" of suffering. At the end of the way, he did suffer much; so there is also much mercy in his death, for which his wife, Elizabeth ("Lies"), his children, and many of his friends give thanks to God.

I knew John (or "Jan," as we called him) when he had his second congregation, in Marrum, the Netherlands. Jan was one of us "old guard" pastors who emigrated to Canada after World War Two to minister to other post-war Dutch immigrants. He served, in rather quick succession, five congregations in the Netherlands and four in Canada.

We in that post-war generation had the privilege of taking over the American home missionaries who had planted a new shoot of the Christian Reformed Church in this country. We cared for that plant during its growing years. With fondness we remember Guillaume, Hart, Praamsma and others. Now John has joined these forerunners.

The Lord blessed John with an optimistic nature, a childlike faith, tremendous energy, a fabulous memory and good organizational skills. He was a faithful pastor, enthusiastic

preacher and even a good businessman. We are thankful for all he did with those gifts, including being involved in the building or development of churches, schools, the Council of CRCs in Canada, Salem Christian Mental Health Association and Holland Christian Homes.

Calvinist Contact was very dear to him and early on he helped the paper in many ways, including financially. He was secretary of the editorial board and wrote articles and columns for many years.

We who knew John cherish many memories of him, recalling this text which he undoubtedly quoted often: "I heard a voice in heaven say, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.' 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'they will rest from their labour, for their deeds will follow them'" (Rev. 14:13). The text actually states that God lets them die so that they may rest; they can do this because they have left behind golden memories of their service to the Lord.

May the Lord comfort Lies, their sons Cor and Andy, daughters Joanne and Ellen and all who mourn — and rejoice — with them.

Rem Kooistra
Waterloo, Ont.

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A lesson on God's grace and holiness over a coffee and muffin

The other day I walked out of the office to go across the plaza for a cranberry carrot muffin. My favourite. They were out of them a few weeks earlier. Something had happened to the cranberry crops or to the purchasing agent for Donut Diner Incorporated. Whatever the reason, the problem had been corrected and I once again have good reason for propelling myself across the parking lot. But I digress, not in my walk but in my talk.

This bright October day when I stepped out, a man whom I judged to be in his sixties walked by. He looked up at the sign over our door.

"Calvinist Contact," he mused aloud.

"That's right," I said.

"Are you a Calvinist?" he wanted to know.

"Am I a Calvinist?" I answered. "I'm the editor of a paper called *Calvinist Contact* and I just finished writing a four-page statement on being a Calvinist."

"The name's Bill Friesen."

"Sounds Mennonite."

"It is Mennonite. But I'm not."

I introduced myself. I could tell that he wanted to talk so we ended up going to the coffee shop together. Bill didn't want anything to eat or drink. He just wanted to talk.

Bill proved to be a lively sort who wears his heart on his sleeve. He once kissed a waitress at a restaurant for saying that he didn't nearly look his age. According to his version of the event, it made her day.

Focus on the position

He wears his faith on his sleeve, too. He shared with me a long conversation he once had with a woman who was no longer going to church. She had had a pregnancy out of wedlock 20 years ago. The judgmental attitude of people in her church kept her from ever going to church again. Bill started to talk to her about God's way of dealing with people. "It's the position, not the walk," he told her.

What Bill meant by that became abundantly clear in the course of our conversation.

Bill started talking about the prodigal son.

"Tell me," he said to me as if I were the woman who had had a child out of wedlock, "What did the son say to himself once he had gotten himself in a pigsty — 'I gotta look for another father'? No, he already had a father. And what did the father do when his son returned? Did he wait patiently for him to explain himself? No, he rushed out before he even knew whether the son was repentant. And he totally ignored the son's offer to become a servant. This was his son who had come home. The position determined the relationship."

Bill's talk with the "prodigal" woman had lasted for several hours. Bill had reminded her of her earlier commitment to Christ. When the two of them finally walked back to their cars in the parking lot, the woman had shouted to him across three rows of cars: "It's the position, not the walk!" "You got it," he had shouted back.

Bill Friesen believes that one can never fall from grace. "That happens to be one of the tenets of Calvinism," I told him. Calvinism, Snalvinism, he didn't care too much about that. "What can separate us from the love of Christ?" Bill asked me, referring to Romans 8.

"Nothing," I answered dutifully.

Bill quoted John 10: 28 as if he needed to sell

"perseverance of the saints" to a born-and-bred Calvinist — "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand."

I nodded ferociously while trying to swallow a large chunk of cranberry carrot muffin. Never had an Inuit bought a refrigerator with greater enthusiasm.

Blood on his hands

Lest anyone think that Bill is not concerned with the walk of a Christian he came out with a dandy caveat. "Of course, if you have committed a grave sin you must be disqualified from being an elder in the church," he said. I didn't need to prod Bill for biblical proof of that either.

"Look at David," he said. "He was one of God's favourites. So David decided to build the Lord a temple. He gathered all kinds of wood and gold and silver, and he was ready to start the project. And what did the Lord say to him?"

"You can't build it," I answered like a good boy.

"That's right. And why can't he build it?"

"Because there's blood on his hands."

"That's right. You see, it's true that the Lord has forgiven David, but there are certain things God does not want desecrated, especially when his Name is at stake. God does not want his holy temple desecrated.

"The same holds true for eldership in the church. What does it say? 'An elder must be the husband of one wife.' So John Smith wants to be an elder. But John Smith is a divorced and remarried man. Is he the husband of one wife? Remember, there are two Mrs. Smiths walking around, but only one was joined to him by God. Think of the marriage vows. Now, of course, we must accept John Smith and his second wife into the fellowship. But how useful is John Smith as an elder when the Lord wants to teach his people about the sacredness of marriage vows?"

An agent of mercy

I liked much of what Bill Friesen was telling me. I remember having written an editorial some years ago about the fact that leaders should resign their position when they fall into sin. Yet it's not a cut-and-dried position. "I wonder where the church must draw the line?" I asked Bill. "Does every act of indiscretion disqualify a person from being an elder?" Bill did not know either. It has to be a serious sin, he figured.

I had offered Bill half of my muffin, but he declined. His "muffin" was to bring me the Word that morning. I didn't have to do anything but listen and throw in the occasional answer or comment. God was ministering to me body and soul.

It's the position of being a son or daughter that really comes through when you are blessed the way I was blessed that morning. I don't know what was more delicious, the cranberry carrot muffin or the bubbly chatter of a former Snennonite turned Snanglican.

I hope to see Bill Friesen again. He took an issue of *Calvinist Contact* along. Knowing him from this first encounter, he will have plenty to talk about next time.

BW

Letters

Keep the bridge intact

Considering that you have just celebrated Thanksgiving Day in Canada and we will soon be doing so here in the South Land I cannot resist the urge to take this opportunity to say "thank you" for the efforts which you put forth to bring us *Calvinist Contact*. I find that you consistently do a fine job as you bring us news (not only about the church but about the world around us) from a distinctively Christian perspective.

The article selected by Rev. Jacob Kuntz regarding "Children and TV" (Sept. 13, 1991) was right on target. The article entitled "Slippers," in the same issue was delightful. Carl Tuyl faithfully reminds me that I must not take myself too seriously. All this and so much more for less than one dollar a week! Keep up the good work.

Having grown up in Canada, and because I continue to be a Canadian, may I also say that my thanksgiving this

year is somewhat tempered by the reports of congregations in Canada planning to leave the Christian Reformed Church.

A few weeks ago I had the opportunity to visit my family in Owen Sound, Ont. Driving from Grand Rapids, Mich., to Owen Sound was going along fine until I arrived at the Blue Water Bridge which connects Port Huron and Sarnia. It took my wife and I as long to get across the bridge as it did to drive from Grand Rapids to Port Huron. Customs officials were on strike, we were told, and they were "working to rule." [i.e., literally and pendants sticking to one's rules and regulations].

Now there are some in the church who are convinced things are not all going right. They suggest that we must be called back to work by the rules. It may take us considerable time to work out the issues and our Kingdom journey

may be set back significantly. That is already sad when so many of the world's burgeoning population of over five million people are not yet "across the bridge" and safely at harbour in the knowledge of Christ as Lord and Saviour of their lives.

May I suggest that while we are seeking to figure out the work rules we must not sever the bridge of our unity in Christ. We must hold on to each other across the border and we must hold on to each other on either side of the border as well. Then, as we celebrate Thanksgiving, we will say, "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?" (I Cor. 10:16).

John Van Schepen
Bellflower, Calif.

History repeats itself

The first Christian Reformed Church of Lethbridge has stepped out of the CRC. Terrible, you say. Is it? Is it better to stay together if we cannot agree with each other on the fundamentals and the true understanding of Scripture or to part company and live in peace? Is not the latter a better, more God-glorifying way? What did Paul and Barnabas do when they could not agree, for a far lesser reason than what we have now?

A lot is said about "unity" and staying together; but how can two walk together if they don't agree? (Amos

3:3). There will never be unity as long as we are in this world, not until Christ returns.

After the fall in paradise God said, "I will put enmity between the serpent and the seed of the woman" and that stands until Christ returns. You may say, "But we are Christians, that should not affect us." It does. We are sinful in and of ourselves and no good can come out of us. It is only through grace that we can hope.

We as Christians suffer more from the divisions created among ourselves

than from forces from the unbelievers around us. And sad to say this is what the unbelievers see in the "church people." There is a lack of knowledge in the church today because we do not reflect on the Word of God as a light for our walk in life. When we do not read the Bible we will no longer understand. And if we don't understand, what about our children and grandchildren?

John Vander Wekken
Iron Springs, Alta.

A happy proposal

We belong to the Reformed Church of America, but many of our friends are members of the Christian Reformed Church. It is so very sad to see divisions coming into the CRC.

Considering the fact that the ordination of women was approved years ago in my denomination, very few churches are calling female pastors or electing female elders. Many in the RCA

are like myself, convinced that the ordination of women is clearly against the instructions of the Apostle Paul to Timothy (ch. 3: 1-13).

Since there are many in the RCA struggling with the same issue, perhaps there is a happier alternative. Instead of more divisions why not allow all the liberals of both denominations to join together, as well as all the

conservatives? That way we will still have two denominations, but it would eliminate the need for further divisions. Think what it would mean, especially for the conservatives, in terms of peace — no more debating and arguing about women in office!

Jelle de Jong
Grimsby, Ont.

Reference to 'high rollers' a put-down

We appreciated the article about Genesis Place, our new ministry facility in Richmond Hill, Ont., that ran in the Sept. 20 issue of your paper. We are always pleased when our project makes the news because it helps your readers to better understand how we are attempting to minister in Richmond Hill. It may also inspire and challenge other churches to tackle significant projects and grow as a church in both word and deed.

However, the use of the phrase, "Some of its members are high-rolling real estate developers...." was an unfortunate choice of words with derogatory overtones. It seems that C.C. has a hard time understanding that God rules the world of finance and business too and that Christians busy in that world need the Christian community's support and encouragement, not subtle or suspicious put-downs that the term "high rollers" conjures up.

Genesis Place is the result of God's blessings on an idea that was conceived by our church's planning committee.

Church members on that committee included a carpenter, a real estate broker, two gardeners, an accountant, two homemakers and a business/design consultant — not your everyday "high rollers." From that original idea, a charitable foundation was created, seed money found, land bought, zoning and planning approvals obtained (including a precedent-setting Ontario Municipal Board hearing that delayed the project by two years and escalated costs) and over \$31 million in financing obtained from government programs. Using consultants (non-members) who were committed to the project with creative non-traditional thinking, the ideas were able to become the reality which we see today.

The project was completed with great personal dedication, sacrifice, prayer and commitment by 50 volunteer members working on eight committees, all totally dedicated to serving God through the work of Genesis Place. They are not "high rollers."

God works through thousands of committed Christians who find

themselves unable to all be ministers or missionaries, but are gifted in other ways and are using their talents for the glory of God. Let's not discourage them, but rather thank God that we are all different, can contribute in countless different ways and build them up.

Anthony Goodhoofd, member
Genesis Place Planning Committee
Jack Vanderkooy, chair,
Genesis Place Planning Committee
Richmond Hill, Ont.

More letters on next page...



News digest

Marian Van Til

Women, choose science!

VANCOUVER — A scientist at Simon Fraser University, 56-year-old Dr. Hilda Lei Ching, has received a YWCA 1991 Women of Distinction Award for her work in trying to attract more women to science and technology fields. Ching is a parasitologist as well as a professor of women's studies at Simon Fraser. She asserts that "girls have to be encouraged from the first grade to think of themselves as scientists." The YWCA cited her for "being instrumental in opening new horizons for future generations of young women in British Columbia," reports *Canadian Scene*.

A native Hawaiian, Ching herself "passed high school science courses with ease," completed two zoology degrees at the University of Hawaii, has more recently founded a scientific society, has organized Canada's first National Conference of Women in Science and Technology and maintains a registry of women scientists in B.C. and the Yukon. Ching is a noted conference speaker and is known as a highly efficient and creative project organizer. One such project shows elementary school teachers how to answer their students' question: "What do scientists do?"

Court procedures streamlined

TORONTO — Ontario's Attorney General Howard Hampton recently announced new procedures for bringing cases to trial which the provincial government says "are saving hundreds of thousands of dollars in the court system" and "eliminating unreasonable court delays."

Those cost-cutting procedures involve the following: "thousands" of civilians and police officers are being released from having to make court appearances; cases made by the prosecution are being disclosed earlier to the defence; charges laid by police are being screened; and more cases are being resolved out of court.

Haven for old tires, dead batteries

VANCOUVER — B.C. is leading the way in Canada with its year-old, highly successful "green levy" on new tires and batteries, reports Alyn Edwards of *Canadian Scene*. The levy of \$3 per tire and \$5 per battery brings a million dollars a month into B.C. government coffers. The money is then used to dispose of old tires and batteries which have been stockpiled all over the province. The money is also subsidizing the cost of transporting the tires to recyclers and processors. Old tires from across the province are now being shredded and used as industrial fuel; they are also being transformed into rubber matting, railway ties, tiles and pickup truck box liners.

Letters

Self-acceptance is difficult under the best of circumstances

We are writing in response to an editorial comment entitled, "should C.C. refuse advertising to AWARE?" found in the Oct. 4 edition of *Calvinist Contact*. As members of the newly formed AWARE, London, who took out the advertisement which has drawn this attention, we feel compelled to respond to a number of statements made by Mr. Witvoet.

First, let us state that Mr. Witvoet's care and consideration towards the plight of us who are homosexual in the Christian Reformed community is appreciated. He obviously sees the need for a support group which can uphold its members in love since "many churches make life most difficult for their homosexual members because there is either total neglect, based often on lack of awareness, or a preoccupation with the orientation itself or an unholly concern to be pure at the expense of love and care."

AWARE's purpose, as we see it, is to provide a safe haven where people who are either homosexual or are affected by a loved one who is homosexual, may find acceptance and affirmation within the context of the Christian community.

"We must be unworthy"

Many of us, who are gay have had a difficult struggle coming to terms with why we are what we are. To accept oneself as a child of God and sibling to Christ is very difficult when you've been

taught while growing up gay, that the homosexual is an abomination unto the Lord. Self-acceptance is difficult under the best of situations but when it is compounded by statements such as "homosexuality is a curse because of the presence of sin in society," it is almost impossible to feel worthy enough to claim Christ's unconditional love for yourself.

After all, we've been led to believe that conditions have been placed on Christ's love for us, and because we are gay, through no fault of our own, we must be unworthy. Is it any wonder that so many of us have left the folds of the Christian Reformed Church?

Thankfully, support groups like AWARE afford us who have struggled for so long with self-acceptance, a place where we can share our burdens and joys and especially our love for Jesus Christ. AWARE has become a vessel for healing and a vehicle of Christ's unconditional love within the Christian Reformed Church's gay community.

AWARE does not impose conditions

Because of this AWARE does not impose conditions upon its membership nor does it promote views of homosexuality that conflict with Christ's all-encompassing love. We who are members of AWARE take comfort in our Saviour's words, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this

happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" (John 9:3).

Being "As We Are" isn't so much a curse but a blessing within the body of Christ, his church.

As such we are not able to uphold the "norm" that Mr. Witvoet proposes we uphold. Not because our *modus operandi* is to promote any particular lifestyle over another, but rather because our *modus operandi* is not to impose any condition upon unconditional love. If this means that *Calvinist Contact* will no longer accept our advertising, so be it. We have great faith that AWARE's ministry will flourish in spite of your stand because there is a desperate need for those who are gay within the Christian Reformed Church to find the kind of love and affirmation that AWARE offers to them.

AWARE
London, Ont.

P.S.: We have not included our names due to confidentiality issues. Unfortunately, though many of us have come to accept ourselves, we are not all accepted by our friends and families.

A brief response:

I truly appreciate your letter for its loving tone. I take courage from that, hoping that you have no difficulty

accepting me as your brother in Christ even though I took a rather strong position against AWARE. Let me set down just a few comments in reply to what you wrote.

By saying that homosexuality is a curse I don't mean to imply that homosexuals are cursed but, rather, that they are burdened with a curse, the way sick people are burdened with the curse of a sickness. Curses can be undone by cures or borne because of blessings, but it's important that they not rule us or cause us to stumble.

Christ's love is unconditional, but service to Christ is not unconditional. The Bible is full of instructions about how we can best serve him. And the Church of Christ is not at liberty to tinker with these conditions for service. Holding up the "norm" for life is not reducing the quality of unconditional love.

Your reference to John 9:3 does not help your position. People are apt to jump on that as an example of how the clause "but this happened so that the work of God might be displayed in his life" refers to a cure of blindness. So a proper application of the text to the condition of homosexuality would be — neither the person who suffers from it nor the parents sinned, but a cure would display the work of God.

Editor

'Heavy-handed boycott' of AWARE should extend to all sexual 'sinners'

Congratulations on your courageous stand in dealing with AWARE. Every effort must be made by that group to persuade gay couples to break up, particularly their long-term, monogamous relationships. After each person is living in his or her own home, he or she can then look over their fences and bask in the second-hand joy of heterosexual families. And the will of God (as you understand it) will be complete. Then AWARE's mandate will be merely having to deal with all the loneliness.

However, I hope you are going to be consistent in your advertising boycott. Christ did not say anything specific

about homosexuals, but he sure did about divorce. I hope you are going to withhold any advertising from support groups who are dealing with divorce until they assure *you* that they will discipline each other to make sure no one ever falls in love again, let alone gets married. They must, of course, be encouraged to return to the misery of their former marriage. After all, how dare you put asunder what God has brought together. And you are, after all, taking aim at anything that "is in conflict with the will of God."

Ask for proof of virginity

You can go further. Why not refuse

advertising from any young people's events until you receive assurances from the young men and young women that they are not only still virgins, but that they will discipline each other to remain so until they marry? You would be accomplishing the same thing, and with the same attitude as you are with AWARE.

The [Christian Reformed] official pronouncements that you are so concerned about are now 18 years old, and they were not to be considered as the final word on the situation. The 1973 CRC synod also called upon the church to minister to gays and lesbians. So what has happened? **NOTHING!** AWARE is

the only organization that is grappling with the issues and lending support to people who are in fact part of your community.

You "urge all Christians to pray for and work with homosexual brothers and sisters in an attitude of humility, acceptance and obedience." If singling out AWARE for your heavy-handed boycott is the best you have to offer, I weep for the church, let alone the gays and lesbians who are still working to be part of it.

Don Baxter
Toronto, Ont.

C.C.'s response to AWARE 'reactionary'

Bert Witvoet and his editorial staff deserve some commendation on their decision to be "open and honest with [their] constituency" by providing reasons for a possible rejection of advertising for the support group, AWARE (C.C. Oct. 4). However, as a regular attender of AWARE Toronto's gatherings, and as someone who has found AWARE meetings to be a vital and enriching experience, I feel compelled to respond to Mr. Witvoet's editorial decision, which to me appears reactionary. I must note that I am in no way a spokesperson for AWARE; I am simply fortunate enough to have been warmly welcomed by this group of dedicated Christians, a fellowship attempting to develop their spiritual lives as gays and lesbians within various church communities.

I find it peculiar that, as a rule, those most vociferously opposed to the "activities" of AWARE seem to be least in touch with the group itself, and

make no concerted effort to either attend one of AWARE's meetings (despite numerous published invitations) or to otherwise educate themselves concerning the very real presence of lesbian and gay members in the Christian Reformed and other Reformed Churches. The fear and anger that often confronts AWARE when its name appears in publications such as *C.C.* — and to this may now be added the threat of rejected advertising — is symptomatic of an unwillingness to engage in sympathetic dialogue.

Heterosexuals aren't asked to remain 'chaste'

I am constantly appalled (and occasionally amused) at the confidence exhibited by those politically and socially privileged heterosexuals who urge "chastity" and "the norm of abstinence" for their gay sisters and brothers. What an easy and unself-critical position for a straight person to

take — especially when one considers that no straight person will ever be required to assume that perpetual abstinence from sex which is so often recommended to those "cursed" with homosexuality.

The CRC and its official publications will sooner or later have to face some facts and prepare themselves for the inevitable repercussions. Gays and lesbians exist; gays and lesbians experience sexual desire which is as real as anybody else's; gays and lesbians struggle as deeply with their faith and are as convinced of their acceptance in Christ as anyone else. AWARE, in my understanding, exists to encourage and support its members in living Christ-like lives. Its concern is not, as Mr. Witvoet would have it, to "exercise discipline among [its] members when some of them live together in a homosexual relationship," but to encourage and sustain those who have too often found themselves marginalized and

disregarded by the church.

Peter W. Sinnema
Toronto, Ont.

Flags and taxes

An American asked a Dutchman what his country's flag looked like. "Oh," said the Dutchman, "it has three stripes — one is red, one is white and one is blue. D'you know that our flag often reminds me of taxes?" he added. "We become red when we talk about them, we turn white when the bill arrives and we feel blue after we have paid them." "I see," said the American. "Actually, it's the same with us, only we see stars as well."

Submitted by a reader

Media

Cinema summaries

Marian Van Til

Black Robe

Rated AA

Stars Lothaire Bluteau, August Schellenberg, Tanto Cardinal
Based on the novel by Brian Moore
Directed by Bruce Beresford

Black Robe, A Canadian-Australian production about a fictional 17th-century French Jesuit named Father Laforgue (Lothaire Bluteau), whose passion it is to take the Gospel to the Huron Indians of Quebec, was the curtain-raiser at the Toronto Festival of Festivals this fall. Various Canadian reviewers have acclaimed it, but after having seen it I began to wonder whether those reviewers and I watched the same movie.

As the lights came up after the film my first thought was: what's the point? why make such a film? — hardly questions one should need to ask at the end of a film about a missionary journey.

Black Robe spends its whole two hours on Fr. Laforgue's arduous trip from explorer Samuel de Champlain's fort at Ihonatria to a Huron mission 1,500 miles west. Laforgue is guided west by Algonquin Indians, most of whom don't understand what he's about. They consider him to be a demon, a notion he seems ill-equipped to counter. Soon the superstitious Algonquins abandon him. (Incidentally, "Black Robe" does not refer to the priest's garb but to Fr. Laforgue himself; the name is bestowed upon him in derogatory amusement by the Indians.)

A chief named Chomina, his family, and a handful of others decide to go on with Laforgue and his young assistant, Daniel (Daniel thought he was aspiring to the priesthood but initiates a sexual relationship with Chomina's teen-aged daughter, Annuka, and eventually also leaves Laforgue). Along the way, the hostile Iroquois, who really seem to qualify as "these savages," as Laforgue calls them, take a bloody toll.

The most spectacular thing about *Black Robe* is its technicolour capturing of the breathtakingly beautiful, uninhabited area of north-central Quebec where it was filmed. That beauty mingles eerily with the harshness of the story's early-winter journey and the strangeness of the title-role character, who remains enigmatic. Part of that "mystery" is caused by Lothaire Bluteau's problematic portrayal of Laforgue.

One gets the impression that Bluteau took his meek, silently suffering, nearly speechless characterization of the actor/Christ figure in *Jesus of Montreal* (appropriate to that film) and tried to transpose it (inappropriately) to this film.

Christians are passive?

Laforgue appears committed but maddeningly passive; he's idealistic and naive, just this side of being a wimp. He's so other-worldly that, when he does say

anything, he talks only of Paradise. He seems to disregard that *this life* has any purpose — except, in his case, to evangelize the Indians.

That picture is hardly historically or theologically accurate; though various Catholic orders focussed on withdrawing from the world, the pro-active, red-blooded Jesuits were not among them. And missionaries to the New World, especially those in the second wave after contact had already been established, knew what they were getting into. Laforgue is singleminded about his calling but that zeal comes off as a kind of self-flagellation. Even considering that there may have been some room for that kind of attitude in 17th-century Catholic theology, his attitude seems odd and excessive.

A plot-line oddity (though perhaps not to modern movie makers and audiences) is that Laforgue, who is supposed to have a burning desire to bring the Indians the Gospel, makes no effort to do so to the Algonquins at any time during their months'-long trip. Only when Chomina is about to gasp his last breath does Laforgue

try to get him to believe, all too late. And later Laforgue wonders aloud to God why Chomina will have to spend eternity in utter darkness while he himself will be saved.

Cultural genocide

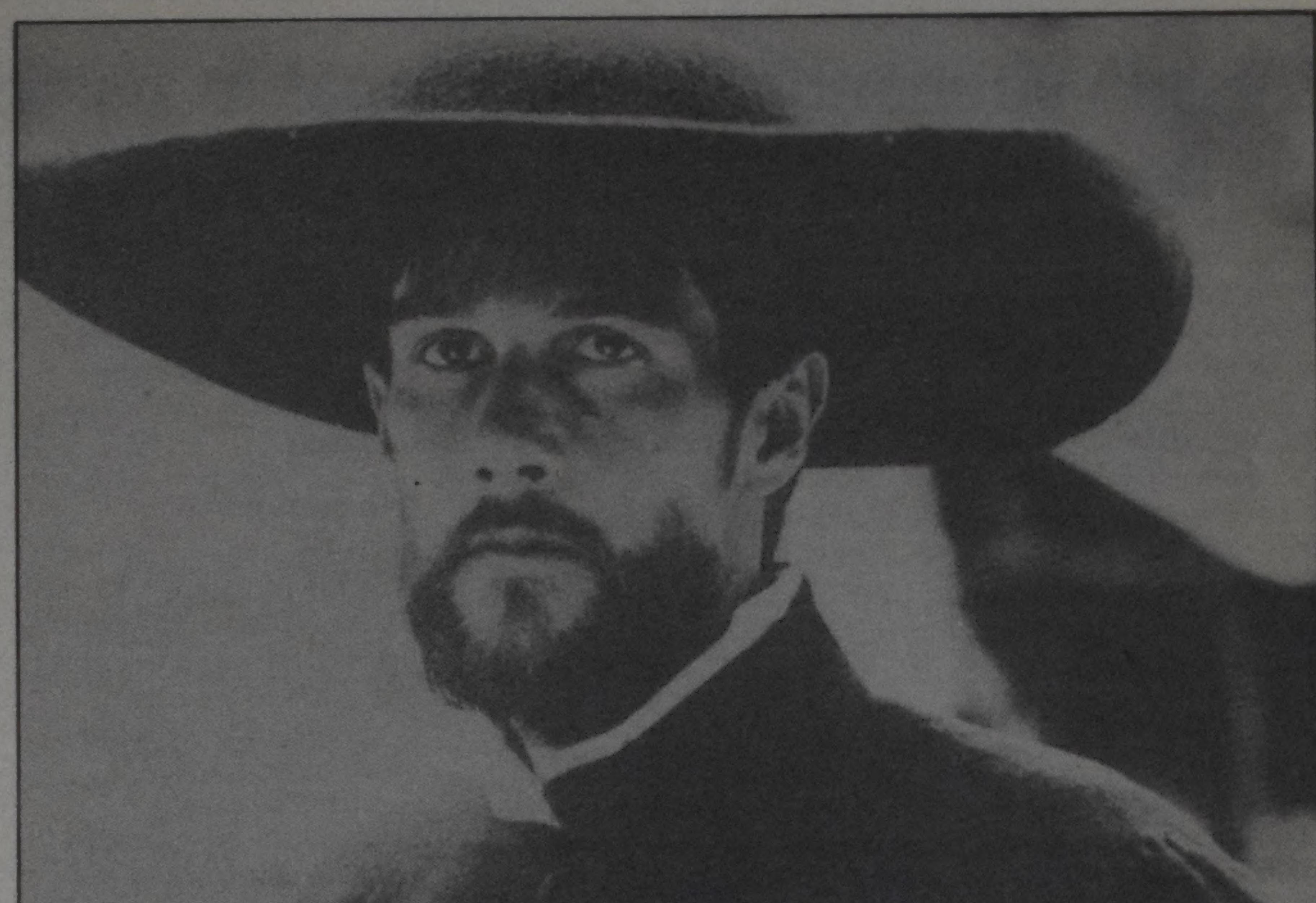
That brings us to the film's implication that the bringing of Christianity would necessarily defile or even decimate Indian culture. That indeed has happened whenever missionaries who professed Christ elevated their own cultural trappings to a par with the Gospel; but that is not the Gospel's fault. And it didn't happen in the case of the Hurons. Think, as a small example, of the real-life Father Jean de Brebeuf and the "Huron Carol" he composed. Also an accomplished linguist who compiled a Huron grammar and dictionary, he presents to the Hurons the Gospel of Christ's birth in the cultural terms they would understand: Christ was a gift of the *Gitchi Manitou*, the Great Spirit; mighty hunters listen to the angels' song in awe, etc.

Black Robe ends with Fr. Laforgue's arrival at the mission already established in

the Huron village. He finds one priest dead and another elderly priest dying. The Hurons react hostilely to Laforgue; fever has ravaged them and the old priest has told them baptism will save them; they are skeptical. Laforgue tells them it will not save them unless they believe, but he baptizes them to save his own life, praying that God will save them all. The film makes Christianity's "magic" look little different than that of the medicine men.

A written epilogue tells viewers that the Hurons did accept Christianity and that 15 years later they were all wiped out by the Iroquois, implying a weakening of the Hurons and a cause-and-effect between the two events.

Australian director Bruce Beresford knows how to make good films — *Driving Miss Daisy* is one of them; this isn't. While his portrait is not wholly unsympathetic, it suffers from a fundamental lack of understanding of the Christian faith, a head-knowledge-only of the Gospel — and from playing fast and loose with history.



Fundamentalist Muslims try to break up premiere showing of 'Jesus' film in USSR

MOSCOW, U.S.S.R. (EP) — About 50 angry Muslim demonstrators gathered outside a theatre in the Chuvash Republic in the Soviet Union to protest the recent screening of the movie *Jesus* in a Muslim village there. However, they were dispersed by police before the audience, made up of Islamic leaders and several deputies from the Communist Party in the area, left the theatre.

"Although we had the complete approval of the village leadership to show the screening, there was nevertheless a group of zealots who tried to disrupt the film," said Barry Feiss, a spokesperson for the film. "Fortunately for us, the police

drove them away during the premiere, so when we came out of the theatre there were no problems."

Trade Union representatives, librarians, teachers, reporters, and even the actor who dubbed the voice of Jesus in the Tatar language all attended the premiere performance, along with an audience of about 300 others.

The premiere was held on a collective farm about three hours outside of Cheboksari, the capital of Chuvashia, about 300 miles east of Moscow. There are no churches on the collective farm and only one mosque in that predominantly Muslim region.

Not all Muslim leaders reacted to the film with

hostility. Following the screening of the film, one Islamic leader gratefully commented to the missionaries, "Thank you for visiting our village. We feel we are fulfilling the same mission with you." He then gave the *Jesus* film representatives a souvenir with some words from the Koran on it.

Another Tatar Muslim leader said, "After watching the film, I felt the foundations of our religions are humanity and morality. And people must create such films — not nuclear bombs, not nuclear arms. We must have friendship and help each other."

Later, contracts were signed to distribute the film in 31 commercial motion picture

theatres among the one million Tatar speakers who populate the area's 10 largest cities.

Paul Eshleman, president of the *Jesus* film project, said, "One Communist Party official commented to our team at the premiere, 'This film should have been shown here much sooner. It gives us the

reason why we don't need to have borders. Even with the demonstration before the film, we know the showings of the film are going to have a great impact on the entire region and on the people there. We are thrilled at the door God has opened to us in this region of the Soviet Union.'"

Zondervan enters video world

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (EP) — The Zondervan Corporation's chain of Family Bookstores have introduced a new promotional tool — FBTV. According to *The CCM Update*, FBTV (Family Bookstores Television) in an

MTV-like video show that will soon be aired in all of the company's 126 retail stores. A bank of video monitors will display music videos, artist interviews and information about in-store promotions.

Church

Marian Van Til, page editor

Nigeria suspends its questionable participation in Islamic conference

Richard Nyberg

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (NNI) — Nigeria has reportedly suspended its participation in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), in what had been viewed as a controversial political move by Africa's most populous state. Though officially secular, the Nigerian government has been rocked by years of religious violence between Muslims and Christians.

President Ibrahim Babangida, a Muslim and leader of Nigeria's military government and current chairperson of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), announced the suspension in an August 18

interview in the independent newspaper *Champion*. In the article, he admitted that the country's officially registered membership in the OIC since 1986 had created considerable "controversy."

Prior to the interview with Babangida, most Nigerians were not aware that their country held full membership status in the organization.

Christians, generally recognized as being concentrated in the country's south, have strongly objected to the government's involvement with the OIC, fearing it could lead toward the transformation of Nigeria into an Islamic republic.

Sunni Muslims are the majority in Nigeria's volatile

north, where many fanatical Shiites are believed to have infiltrated the Muslim community in recent years, sparking violent clashes with Christians.

'No comment'

The OIC controversy first came to light in early 1986 when it was announced in Morocco that Nigeria had been accepted as a member state in the conference. Babangida, who seized power in a coup in August 1985, initially confirmed the membership. But after protests from Christian groups, the government tried to distance itself from the issue, first by denying it had joined and later by refusing to comment at all

on the matter.

According to informed sources quoted in Nigerian press reports, Nigeria had upgraded an observer status to take up full membership in 1986.

In a bid to sound out the pros and cons of joining the OIC, the government set up a religious advisory council made up of Christians and Muslims which drafted a report that has not yet been made public.

Since 1980, when the first Muslim-Christian (non-Muslim) confrontation took place following a revolt led by a Muslim from Cameroon, more than 6,000 people have died in religiously motivated clashes, and fanatics on both sides have

destroyed churches, mosques and other public buildings worth millions of dollars. Much of the conflict has been centred in the northern states of Sokoto, Katsina and Kano.

In the latest outbreak of violence, Muslims and Christians clashed for four days in the northern state of Bauchi in April following a dispute over the use of a slaughterhouse. According to official reports, 171 people were killed. Independent sources have placed the death toll at more than 1,000. Some 1,700 buildings were also destroyed, including churches and mosques.

The 'brightest light in Jerusalem'

JERUSALEM, Israel (EP)

— A new program out of a children's centre in Israel will educate at least 4,000 needy children from Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the West Bank over the next year, according to Mercy Corps International, a North American Christian relief and development agency.

"This new endeavor will help poor children who have learning and emotional disabilities," said Jan Phipps, Mercy Corps/Spafford Children's Centre administrator. "Because of the continuation of violence in the region, many children's lives have been seriously affected. Our goal is to give these kids the

opportunity to develop their fullest potential, since no other group is providing this help in a meaningful way."

The Spafford Children's Centre is an historic, 65-year-old outreach that serves Jerusalem's impoverished children. Today the Christian-based clinic brings together Christians, Muslims and even a Jewish doctor to help the children. This model of reconciliation, which provides medical care to needy kids and prenatal and nutrition classes to mothers, has been called by Jerusalem's mayor, Teddy Kollek, "the brightest light in Jerusalem."

'Emergency alert' issued by Salvadoran church over possible expulsion of missionary

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador (EP) — An "emergency alert" was posted by the Salvadoran Lutheran Synod Oct. 6 concerning the possible expulsion of a Lutheran missionary from El Salvador, according to a report from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

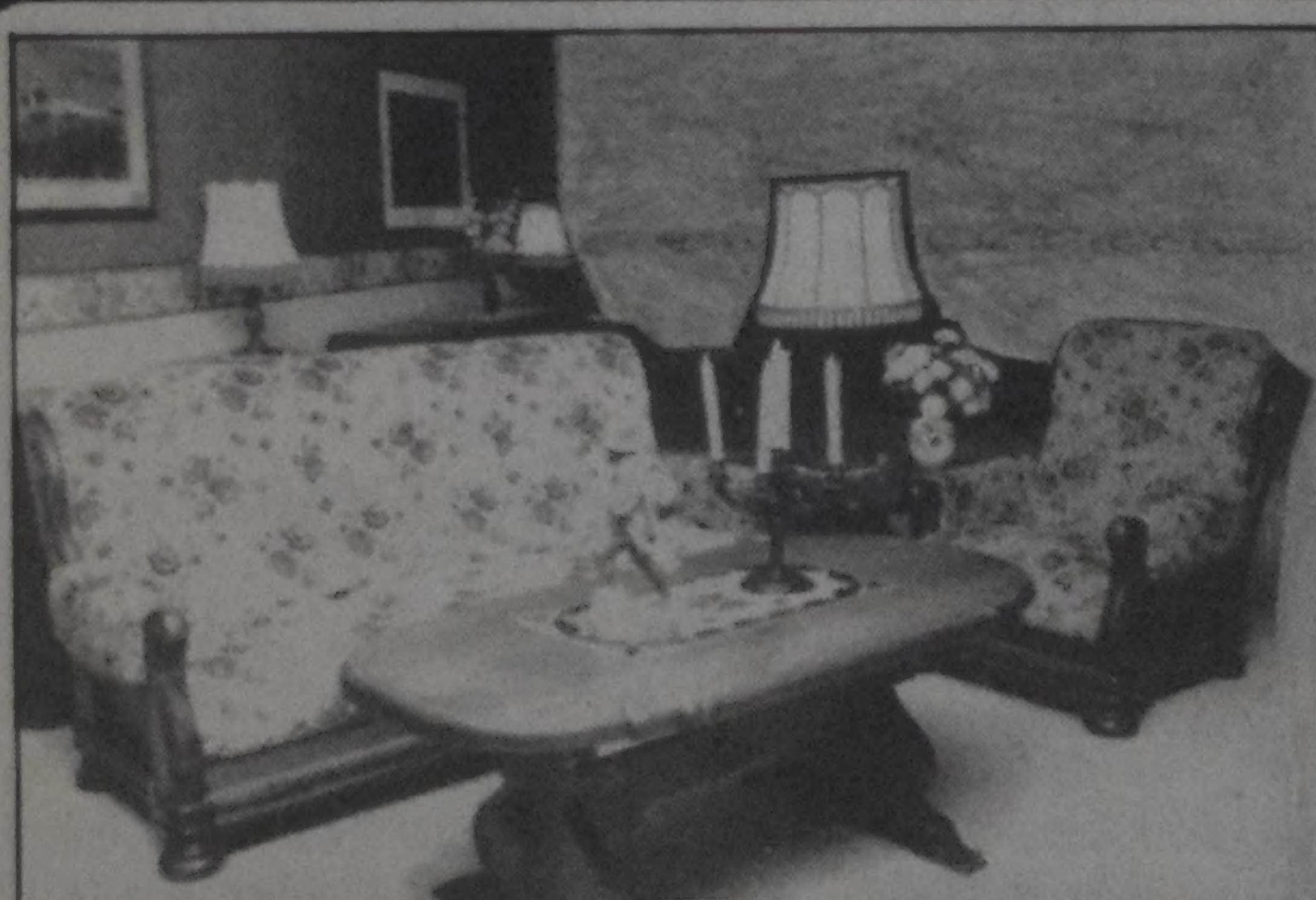
The church received written notice that the application for a one-year extension of the temporary residency of the Rev. Daniel Long of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is being denied. "Our church considers this action to be a case similar to previous cases involving international church workers in which the government's actions constitute an

intervention in the work of the church with the purpose of damaging the ministry of the church," the alert said. "We are confident that there are no reasonable grounds for denying Long's residency since his work here has been totally dedicated to support of the ecclesial and social ministry of the church."

Long said he was told that his residency was not being extended because of his participation in anti-government activities in San Antonio, Texas. They synod's co-ordinating council said, "If the government is successful in removing one pastor for reasons of ideological discrimination, it would be possible to remove any pastoral

agent or social worker assigned to the church for similar reasons." To deny residency based on participation "in legal activities in their country of origin is not consistent with the declared democratic principles of the government, and if allowed to prevail would constitute an important mechanism for official repression of churches, popular organizations and others that the government would consider to be opposition."

The church intends to continue to press the extension of the residency and is asking for support from other Lutheran churches across North America.



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Dutch youth gather for summer 'dessert'

FLEVOLAND, Neth. (REC) — More than 8000 Dutch youth gathered at summer's end for the Flevo festival. Youth for Christ sponsored this gathering to close the holidays for the 14th straight year. Besides speeches and chapel services, youth went to dance parties, had their "colours" analyzed (for wearing the right clothes), sat for theatre performances, and joined in gymnastics with brunch.

One of the speakers at the three-day festival was Franky Schaeffer, an evangelical film-director. Schaeffer told the youth there was no division

between Christian work and secular work. He noted that Rembrandt had painted both biblical scenes and a portrait of his wife in the nude. If Rembrandt were doing that today, he would have a lot of explaining to do, Schaeffer said. He concluded that all

reality stands under the lordship of Christ.

The Flevo festival has grown steadily, this year having 600 more than last. In the future, organizer Dik de Jong said, the festival may become more international and grow even larger.

Bible stops debate in Russian parliament

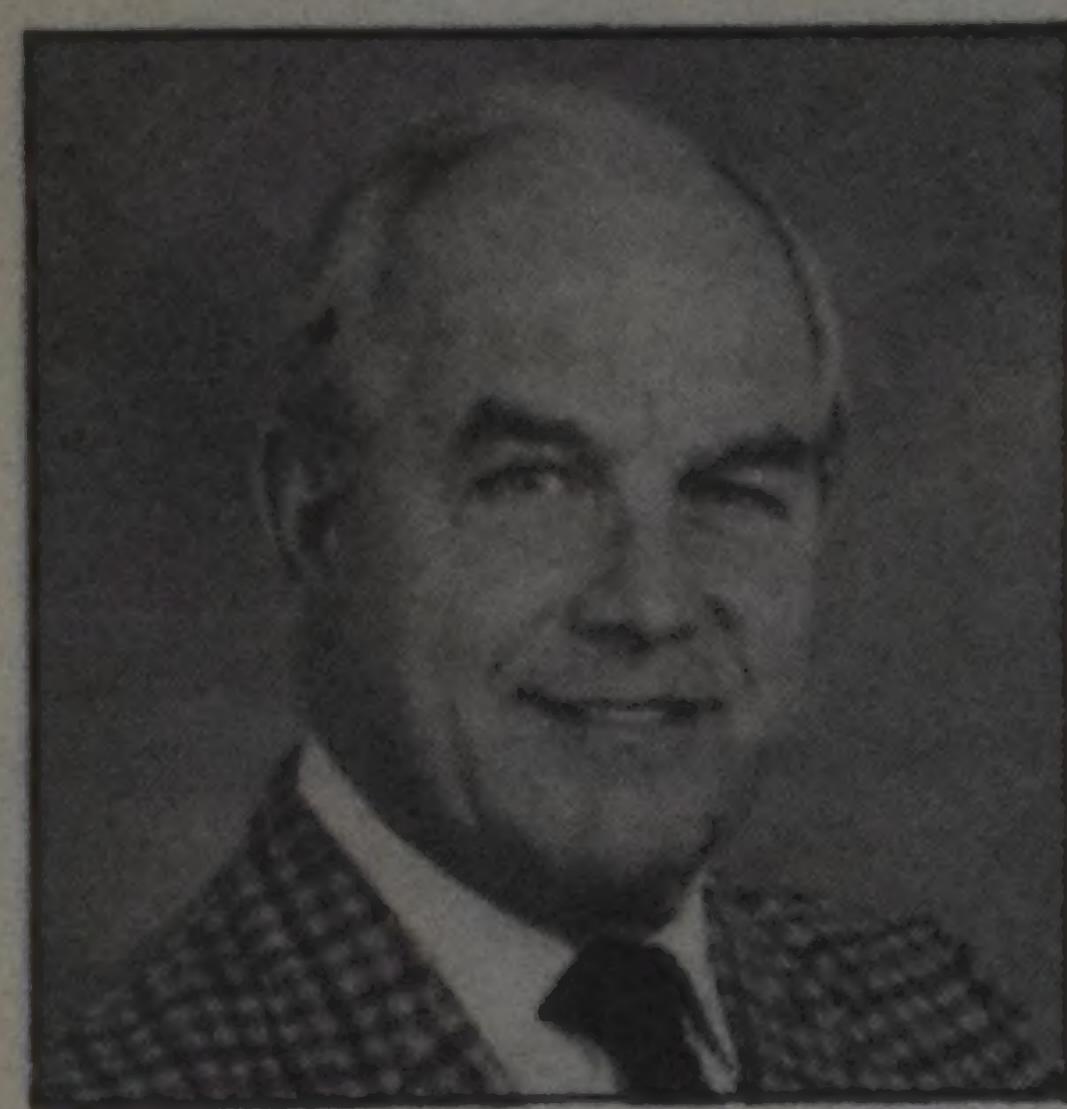
MOSCOW, U.S.S.R. (EP)

— Debate in the Russian parliament stopped recently when participants heard Christians were giving away

Bibles in the hall outside. Legislators, police, service workers and bureaucrats "elbowed their way" into lines to receive Bibles and New Testaments, according to the *National and International Religion Report*. "The Word of God softens and calms hearts," a Bible society official said. "In these cruel times, it is good to put Bibles in the hands of parliamentarians."

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Canadian Church Scene

Jacob Kuntz

Needed: Government reform

The editor of *Christian Week* recently asked the question: What was behind the PSAC strike? Government employees work under better conditions than most Canadians and are paid better; they also have better benefits. So why should they complain? According to the editor we should seek the answer "in the culture which surrounds those who work within government: the people who should do the modelling, aren't." Too many people at the upper levels of government set a bad example by enriching themselves. Civil servants don't see "why they should assume the burden of restraint."

"Parliamentarians have set some of the worst examples — and modelling is what our current crisis is all about. We have not had examples which will inspire others to pull together for the common good. Just before the government came down with its budget, knowing very well the extent of our financial crisis, MPs gave themselves a 3.78 per cent increase on a salary that at that time was \$64,400. This was in addition to a new housing allowance of \$6,000 which they had given themselves a year ago in summer, which was tax-free, as well as an expense allowance of \$21,300 that they already had, which was also tax-free.

"Not only that, MPs have allowed a pension plan to remain in effect which lets them begin to collect after only six years in Parliament, and starts not at age 65 or even 55, but as soon as they lose an election. A minimum pension now is \$18,000 a year. After 15 years, they would get 75 per cent of their best six years, beginning as soon as they leave politics, even if they are only 40 or 50 years old.

"Someone has figured out what some of the younger MPs would get if they left politics now and collected till they were 75: for Svend Robinson (age

39) it would be \$2.5 million; for Joe Clark (51) it would be \$2.6 million; for Bill Blaikie (39) it would be \$2.6 million; for Perrin Beatty (40) it would be \$5.2 million; for Robert de Cotret (47) it would be \$3.2 million. The formulas for the MPs pension is two and a half times more generous than the maximum legal level in private sector plans. By contrast, the British prime minister retired after 11 and a half years with a pension equal to that of a well-paid secretary. That's merely the beginning.

"The fact is that our federal government is largely controlled by people who know the seriousness of the debt the country is carrying (over \$415 billion now) and the deficit we are running this year (likely in the \$35 billion range), and yet are unwilling to place the same pain on themselves that many Canadians are feeling.

"It is no wonder then that people employed within the civil service have adopted the attitudes they have. The government has forfeited its moral leadership. They are asking for sacrifices from the civil service that they refuse to make themselves. We need a reform beginning at the top."

A 'new world order'?

Ever since the Gulf War we have heard about "the new world order," especially in the speeches of the American president, George Bush. It would be a tough assignment if someone had to define that new world order; after all, the political constellation of the world may have changed (also in the Middle East), but people have not changed, and self-interest (also American self-interest) remains the basic motive in many activities and decisions. The *Catholic New Times* of Oct. 6 had this to say with respect to that "new order":

"We do not believe in the new world order proclaimed by George Bush. We do not believe there is any hope for Christians, for Palestinians or for Israelis if our security is

ultimately tied to the self-interest of the United States. This is a ruthless and brutal empire in which words like 'democracy,' 'human rights' and 'national sovereignty' are

Mennonite wisdom

The simple lifestyle of Old Order Mennonites was recently illustrated in a short article in the *Mennonite Reporter* of Oct. 14 by a member of that group. He was the "lucky" winner of a gift certificate, but the luxurious items that were offered and the savings that could be realized simply had no attraction for him. Old Order Mennonites do without most of the luxuries to which our society has become accustomed, but the writer is convinced "that we live happier and more fulfilling lives than those who have everything and still ask for more."

This is his story:

"Our local newspaper, in co-operation with local merchants, is sponsoring its First Annual Gift Certificate Program. For \$44.95, selected people are entitled to receive up to \$500 worth of savings, gifts and services. The operator draws telephone numbers out of a hat to find the lucky winners. "We happened to be among the 'lucky' winners. When I answered the phone, the operator congratulated me and started to read off the list of gifts and savings to which we were entitled: free oil change, brake inspection, muffler inspection, car wash, radiator test....

"Wait a minute!" I cut in. "We don't even have a car."

"You don't have a car?"

She sounded incredulous.

"Then what about flowers, hair styling, shampoo and sun tanning?"

"I'm sorry, but none of that interests us."

"Oh!" She began to show frustration. "Well, you would be entitled to two movie rentals and three tickets for cross country skiing."

"We don't indulge in movies or in skiing."

"Here's one that you can't resist, though. You are entitled to three family portraits, for a total value of \$239.85. I'm sure you would appreciate that."

"We do not sit for portraits."

"Do you eat out sometimes? There are several meals available which, if you buy one, you get the second

one free."

"We never go to a restaurant just for the sake of eating out; only when we are too far from home at lunchtime, and then we usually pack a lunch."

"That's when the operator gave up. The only items on the long list which would have been of any value to us was two pounds of nails, which would not have been a bargain at \$44.95."

"I did not regret the fact that we could not benefit from these savings. Instead, I realized once again how fortunate we are that we are not compelled by our society to spend money for such a wide range of items and services."

The church's priority

Recently we published a short article about Henry Nouwen, the Roman Catholic priest who lives his life at Daybreak, a home for handicapped adults. The *Presbyterian Record* of Sept. 1991 published an interview with Dr. Nouwen. The subject was "The Church and its Ministry in the '90s." The last interview question was: "What do you see as the main priority for the church as it approaches the 21st century?" This was Nouwen's answer:

"I am particularly concerned with the role and place of the clergy. I believe the church's most urgent priority is to minister or take care of its priests and ministers. I see an enormous amount of anguish, brokenness, loneliness, woundedness and searching for God among the clergy. There is so much exhaustion and burnout. Many ministers do not feel

cared for or supported by either their colleagues or their congregation. Too often their relationships are only superficial rather than nurturing or supportive. The pressures of the job mean clergy are caught up in busyness, administration, distractions, important issues, etc. As a result they have little time left over for proper rest, the life of

prayer and solitude.

"The laity has a crucial role to play in supporting ministers. So often the laity can provide precisely the sort of encouragement and support clergy need and help them to claim their ministerial call more fully."

have walked repeatedly over each other's rights. Yet these definite steps would take Palestinians and Israelis beyond the new world order of George Bush toward the really new world order of justice and peace announced by the prophets of Judaism, Islam and Christianity."

Jacob Kuntz is minister-emeritus of the First Christian Reformed Church of Kitchener, Ont.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Ed Billet

The twilight rekindled the terrors of war. A thin silvery hum gradually turned into a roar, a whining sound pierced the air and split seconds later the impact of explosions rocked the earth. It was May 5, 1945, and Allied bombers attacked the last remnants of the German army. Hitler was dead, but his army fought on and his henchmen still hunted for the enemies of the Reich: the resistance fighters, the racial "inferiors," the slave laborers, who had escaped from concentration camps during the chaos of Nazi defeat.

Distant barking and yapping of track dogs startled the three men who had sought refuge in an underground passage below the ruins of a 14th century monastery. As the noise gradually increased the men were able to distinguish several male voices.

"They must have detected us," said the tall blond man, dressed in British army fatigues. His voice revealed fright and resignation.

"Somebody must have tipped them off, Mark," remarked the youngest of the three. "Only the villagers know about the tunnel and we are about an hour's walk from the next habitat."

The third person, a tall, dark-haired man of indeterminate age, wearing a shabby black suit that hung from his emaciated body like a shroud, turned to the younger of the two: "Winfred, are the explosives ready?"

"Yes John," Winfred replied. "When they reach the entrance, I'll set off the charge. Both walls should collapse and bring the ceiling down with them. Our pursuers will not be able to clear the entrance before the war ends, even if they should survive the blast. But we should be capable of digging ourselves out."

The dogs had reached the monastery and the men heard footsteps on the stairs that led to the entrance of the tunnel.

"They're inside," a voice shouted.

"Let's send the dogs after them in case the pigs are armed," another voice replied.

Seconds later the earth reverberated from the blast. When the three men emerged from their hide-out about 13 meters inside the tunnel where they had crouched against the wall, they stared apprehensively at the result of the blast. Now only the outer walls and the ceiling had collapsed, but fallen rock,

some of which was too heavy to be removed by hand, had closed the underground passage for at least three meters.

Winfred was the first one to break the eerie silence. "We can dig ourselves out of here."

Winfred sounded confident but Mark replied, "We can survive in here for a few days. We have enough food and water for at least a week. We have candles, a flashlight and a good supply of matches.

But we will slowly use up the oxygen and will get weaker by the day. They made me work in the mines of Eastern Europe and I was trapped in there once. Poorly constructed runs," he pondered. "They had no time, not enough material and we were expendable. Some of us got out after two days. We left the weak ones behind."

"We are less than three meters from the surface," continued Winfred undauntedly. "We have a good

shovel. We have to dig upwards at a slight angle and should be able to reach ground level within a day. Even if we can't get out, we'll get fresh air in, and they will find us after the war."

John listened patiently to the men. Mark had asked him to come along when they escaped from Hertogenbusch, a concentration camp in the Netherlands. They had walked for two days and had it not been for the courageous Dutchman

who gave them food and clothing and hid them from their pursuers, they would not have survived.

They had gone to the village where Mark and Winfred had grown up and stayed until one of the villagers spotted them. With the S.S. on their heels they had fled into the tunnel and set up the explosive charge with material Winfred had stolen from the ammunition factory where he worked.

The underground passage was about two meters high and one meter wide. It had been cut into soft rock and reinforced with crude brick centuries ago. The tunnel ran straight for about ten meters and then made a sharp turn. After another three meters it was blocked where the ceiling had collapsed. Assuming that from this spot they would reach the outdoors, the men began to dig upwards.

John and Mark soon exhausted themselves, and Winfred, stronger than his emaciated friends, took over. By evening they had advanced at least one meter into the ceiling, when they exposed a solid rock, about half a meter in diameter.

"We can't dig around it, we have to loosen it," said Mark. But by trying to do so, the shovel handle broke and then the shovel bent and split. Worn out and shattered they soon fell into a deep sleep.

The next day the men awoke shrouded in darkness. The candle had burned itself out and the air was thin and heavy with moisture. They lit a new candle and its faint light cast ghastly shadows on the walls of their underground prison. Their faces showed fear, even horror.

"We must get out of here before we suffocate," screamed Winfred and ran towards the blocked entrance with Mark following him. Winfred worked himself into a frenzy, crying uncontrollably as he tore at the large rocks that blocked the passage. Mark finally said, "The more we exert ourselves, the more oxygen we need and the sooner the supply will dwindle. It was our last hope of survival. The best we could have hoped for would have been a shot in the back of the neck. But torture and a slow agonizing death would have been more likely. We made our choice."

"Why does God torture us like this? You are a priest, you should have the answers." Winfred had turned to John, who had joined them.

"God did not do it," John replied quietly. He gave us

I believe in the sun



Ruins of monastery and entrance to underground passage. (Photo probably taken during late 1920's).

Ruins of monastery, destroyed during the 30-Years-War (1618-1648) and under Napoleon Bonaparte. (Early 19th century).



"I was in Auschwitz before I was sent to Hertogenbusch. I have witnessed a holocaust."

Heart Knowledge

I've seen **Apocalypse Now** at the theatre and loftily explained to my husband the parallel to Conrad's **Heart of Darkness**.

I've viewed **Fall Metal Jacket** at the show and was knowingly informed by my husband as to the significance of the title.

We've watched **Platoon** on the big screen and discussed together the symbolism of the hero running with arms outstretched, sacrificed to the war-god.

But horror didn't brand my heart until I witnessed on my own television in my own family room some hazy black and white footage of anguished faces peering through cattle-car slats, an endless row of long black coats collapsing in a trench, contorted human shapes stuck like flies on barbed wire, and a heap of skeletal naked bodies, a woman lying on top, hair still tastefully arranged but arms and legs grotesquely akimbo, pushed by a bulldozer, the driver's hand clutched to his mouth.

I was cornered speechless, hollow.

Cathy Smith
Wyoming, Ont.



freedom to choose and we blew up the entrance in self-defence."

The men returned to where they had tried to dig themselves out. One by one they picked up the shovel, doggedly thrusting it against the giant boulder that would not budge. Soon their grim faces became despondent. Exhaustion forced them to surrender.

Towards evening John began to say the Lord's Prayer. Infuriated, Winfred interrupted him, "Forgive my mother's murderers? They dragged her out of bed the night they burned the synagogues. They raped her and left her dead on the sidewalk. That same night they murdered about 100 other of us Jews throughout Germany, destroyed 7,000 Jewish properties and burned down all synagogues and they made us Jews pay for the damage! They confiscated our insurance money and fined us one billion marks. My father, a Gentile,

was sent to the Russian front, and I had to work for them in the war industry." His voice cracked and he burst into tears.

"You want me to forgive those who murdered women and children, tore babies from their mother's arms and tossed them into the incinerator?" Mark asked. "I was in Auschwitz before I was sent to Hertogenbusch. I have witnessed a holocaust."

"I'm not asking you to forgive them; God asks you," replied John. He paused and his mind seemed to trail off. He then continued, "My entire family was put to death after the plot to kill Hitler failed. I am the only one alive out of a family of six. They let me live to taunt, torture and humiliate me. I also must forgive if I want to be forgiven."

An occasional trickle of earth or the thud of a falling stone interrupted the ominous silence that followed. The three men stared at the flickering light, each wrapped

up in his own thoughts.

Mark had ceased to believe in God and become a Communist when poverty and distress struck his family and his mother had died an untimely death. In the meantime Hitler had come to power and Mark was rounded up with other "enemies of the Reich" and sent to a concentration camp. As the candle burned low and the day had passed, John broke the silence once more. His voice had become weak and his breathing difficult.

"We have been close to death for a long time; daily we witnessed the deaths of others. Now death is reaching out for us. Before we die we have to make peace with God, who told us, 'Love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you, so you will become the sons of our father in heaven who makes his sun shine on good and bad alike.' Only by doing so can we find peace within ourselves."

Neither Mark nor Winfred responded.

The war ended three days after their entombment, but no sound of victory reached their underground prison. They had lost their last fibre of strength and continued to drift into leaden sleep, only to awaken, gasping desperately for

oxygen, mumbling prayers or cursing their fate. John reached for a small piece of bread, and as from far away the other men heard him say, "He took bread into his sacred hands ... this is my body, which is given up for you... Father, I am not worthy ... only say the word ..."

When Mark forced his eyes open, the priest was no longer wearing his ill-fitting black suit but was dressed in a long white robe. And when he offered the large host to him, Mark heard himself murmur, "Father, I forgive them, they did not know what evil they were doing."

When Winfred received the morsel of bread from John's hands, he tried to speak, but

could only cry.

After John had eaten the last piece of consecrated bread, he struggled to his feet to make the last entry on the wall of their tomb, where he had kept a record for those who would eventually find them.

Weeks later one of the villagers remembered what Winfred had told him about his whereabouts, should he not return to the village.

With the help of excavating equipment they were able to clear the entrance to the tunnel and found three men lying as if asleep.

They then read Father John's last words: "May 8, 1945. We are dying. But I still believe in the sun, even if it is not shining. I believe in light, I believe in God, even if he is silent. I believe...."

Ed Billot was born in England of French-German parents. He lived in Germany for 20 years and immigrated to Canada in August 1951. He lives in Thorold, Ont.

Remembrance Day

Why I wear a poppy

Hilda J. Born

Each year about this time we can count on encountering someone wanting to sell us a poppy. I wasn't a soldier. My home wasn't bombed. I didn't see the blood and devastation of a war. But I always buy a poppy. I wear a poppy because I can't forget the way it was.

We were riding in the back of Dad's pickup to a baptism at the river. Everyone who could find a spot was there, it seemed. Even our half-cousin, Jim, was there in his new khaki uniform.

Until then we had only heard the older folks discuss rumours of European war. They talked of it as they warmed their hands around the stove, or maybe Mr. Schellenberg mentioned it while rocking on a milking stool in the middle of the barn, waiting for us girls to finish the milking. Mom told us sadly of losing her only brother in the First World War, and a brother-in-law and uncles, too. But to us that was ancient history.

Now it was real. The Wednesday *Free Press* had it right there on the front page. Poland had been invaded and young fellows like Jim, who were sick of the prairie poverty during the Depression, joined up. They stopped just long enough to say goodbye before heading overseas.

At school many of us joined the Red Cross and worked at projects we hoped would save lives.

There were campaigns to collect all kinds of things to help the Allied war effort. One of the first things to go was the old steam engine parked at the playground. That stately old steamer with its brass whirling handles was hauled away for scrap metal. There was also a campaign to collect the old bleached bones of buffalo off the prairie. I'm not sure why,

but probably for soap-making.

There was rationing. We wrote letters, sent care packages and went through shortages.

My sister Mary was only 18, but had to graduate early from teacher training to fill in as a principal of a rural school with children from Grades 1 to 10. While there she was surprised by a letter from Dad telling of the arrival of a baby sister. The nearest phone was miles away at the telegraph office. Telegrams in those days usually brought only sad news from overseas.

Silver training planes frequently flew overhead and we painted them into every scene we drew at school. The boys made endless model airplanes and we girls knitted for the war efforts while singing patriotic songs.

Praying for peace

Everyone prayed for an early end to the fighting.

At last the end came. The first announcements on the radio were greeted with skepticism. Even then, there was some distrust of the media. Perhaps they were giving false hope; but the joyful truth soon burst out everywhere. One of the celebrants ran over our frisky little terrier that day. But it is such a tiny reminder compared to the anguish and horror that our overseas relatives had to endure.

But we didn't know it all then. The sparse letters were

Iceland poppy



now my husband, turned 18 that May of 1945, just after VE Day. Throughout the year numerous classmates had dropped out to join the services. Jake was ready to join the medical corps, too, after he'd helped his dad with the crop and as soon as his call to serve might come. But instead of military service on behalf of Canada, he was able to study and eventually meet me.

In the decades since the war we seldom talk of love and duty for our country. Our sons and daughters still strive for success, personally and spiritually. I am grateful that they can go to Bible college instead of the battlefield.

Three years ago I was startled by the sight of the clumps of bright red poppies in Europe. We had come to claim kinship with those of our relatives who had finally left countries with repressive regimes. In their story-telling we shared just a glimpse of the terrible torture and lifelong scarring of those survivors. They can never quite forget their past.

My poppy is only a little red flower. But even so, it is a small symbol of the blood that bought our peace. I shall always wear it with humble gratitude.

Hilda J. Born lives on a farm in Matsqui, B.C.

A friend of Jews during the Nazi occupation

A FRIEND AMONG ENEMIES



The Incredible Story of Arie Van Mansum in the Holocaust

Janet Keith

Harry was 20 when the Nazis occupied Holland. He lived in the southeastern province of Limburg. Disregarding danger, he was soon involved in illegal activities such as distributing forbidden literature. From one thing came another, and he was soon also involved in hiding Jews to prevent them from being sent to concentration camps and slaughtered. Of the many Jews who found hiding places through Harry, only two were discovered and consequently lost their lives. Harry did this at great cost and danger. He was eventually caught and sent to a concentration camp himself.

After the war the state of Israel awarded him its Medal of Honour. What made Harry change his mind about sharing this story is the realization that an entire generation has grown up knowing little or nothing about the war and its racist horrors. We need to know lest we repeat the mistakes of the past.

I would like to add that in these days of growing selfishness, of people increasingly absorbed in the pursuit of pleasure, we need to hear about Christians who knew and know how to sacrifice, who laid their jobs, their comforts and their lives on the altar for their fellow human beings. That is what Christ did. And that is what we his disciples are to do if his kingdom is to come.

The older adults among us need this book to be reminded, lest they forget. Younger people ought to read this book, lest they never know.

A friend Among Enemies: The Incredible Story of Arie Van Mansum, by Janet Keith. Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1991. Softcover, 163 pp., \$14.95. Reviewed by Rev. Jacob Quartel, Burlington, Ont.

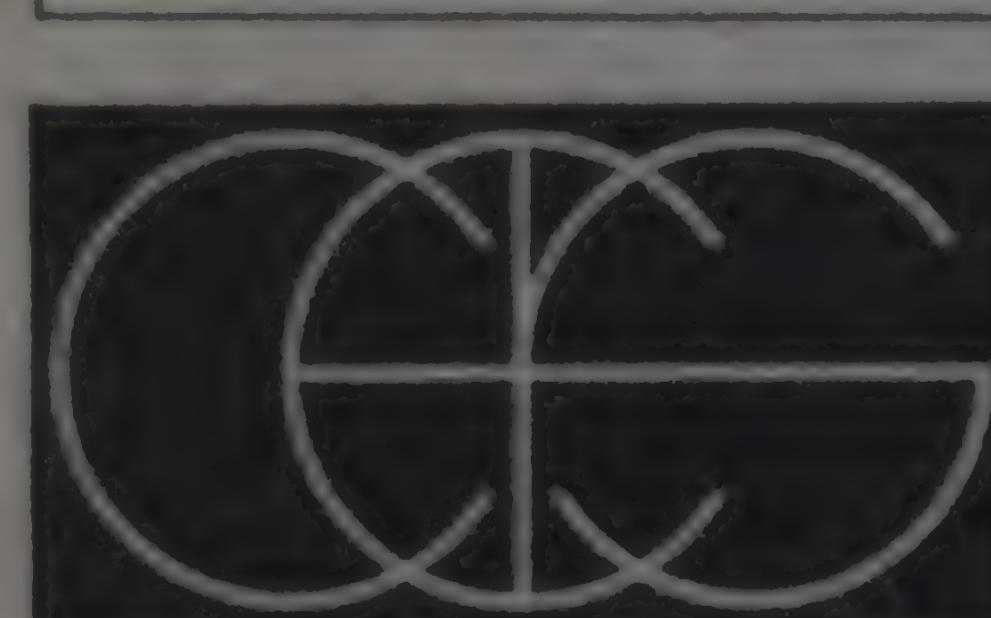
I have known Harry Vanmansum for almost 20 years as a friend and fellow servant in the church. I knew that he had been involved with hiding Jews during the Second world war. Even when we both lived in Ottawa, his interest in

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feature

Charles Haddon Spurgeon: Forgotten giant of the English pulpit

Paul Murray

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a 19th century English preaching sensation. The Baptist boy-preacher was the religious equivalent of the baseball "phenom" with this significant difference — he was no passing spiritual meteor. For 40 years this unusual and talented pulpiteer dominated preaching in Britain. His Sunday sermons were translated into 23 languages, with over a hundred million distributed during his lifetime. His voluminous writings were sufficient to fill the 27 volumes of the Encyclopedia Britannica. Spurgeon was the supreme preacher in an age when preaching giants like Joseph Parker, Alexander McLaren, Alexander Whyte and John Henry Newman dominated the religious landscape.

The young Spurgeon was converted at age 16 when he wandered into a Primitive Methodist chapel during a snow storm. The regular preacher was unable to be present and a layperson took his place. The replacement was no preacher and could but endlessly repeat his text from Isaiah 45:23; "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth." After 10 minutes, and being at the end of his tether, the poor fellow suddenly turned to his small congregation of 16 and singled out Spurgeon, crying, "young man, you look very miserable!" Then lifting up his hands he shouted as only a Primitive Methodist can, "Young man! Look to Jesus Christ. Look! Look! Look! Look! You have nothing to do but look and live."

Well, Spurgeon did look and was converted. A year later he commenced work as a lay preacher in Cambridge and, when only 18, with no formal seminary or theological training, was pastor of the small Baptist congregation at Waterbeach, Cambridgeshire. Two years later he accepted a call to the New Park Baptist Church in London. The facility was located at Southwark near the south bank of the Thames River in a dark, grungy region of the world's largest city. The New Park congregation had been in decline for some years and the large ornate building, which held close to a thousand, was barely a quarter full on Sundays.

On December 18, 1853, the 19 year-old Spurgeon stood in the New Street pulpit for the first time. Soon his sermons began to attract overflow crowds and were published weekly, a practice that continued throughout his long ministry with remarkable and consistent success. In two years time, when the young preacher was but 22, the church was

enlarged, and within two more years the Sunday night services were held at the famed Exeter Hall until the manager decided that he did not want that edifice renowned as the home of Spurgeon's church. The congregation then moved on to the Surrey Music Hall which held up to 12,000 people when full.

Almost from the beginning of his London ministry the young preacher was so popular that admission to services was by ticket and metropolitan police constables were in regular attendance to control entry and the vast crowds that Spurgeon attracted.

A never forgotten tragedy

A tragedy occurred at the Surrey Music Hall one Sunday in October 1856, when some persons in the audience screamed, "Fire!" and the whole place stampeded. The result was seven deaths and 30 injuries. It was thought, but never proven, that this was the work of pick-pockets and thieves wanting to practise their trade in the confusion because there was no fire in the building. The young preacher was devastated and the press, which had begun to comment on his services, was critical. Spurgeon recovered but always remembered that terrible evening in the autumn of 1856.

The New Park Church decided to erect a large new facility of their own to accommodate the crowds thronging to hear their popular preaching sensation and in 1861, when Spurgeon was 27, the impressive Metropolitan Tabernacle was dedicated at Newington Butts. Spurgeon was to preach there for 31 more years until his death at 58 in 1892.

Spurgeon's immense creative energies (he was once referred to as "the most hard working man on the Surrey side of the



Main auditorium, Metropolitan Tabernacle

Thames") went far beyond weekly pulpiteering.

Associated with Metropolitan Tabernacle was a preacher's college where hundreds of young men trained for the Baptist ministry. The last student approved by Spurgeon for the college entrance was Frank W. Boreham who ministered in the antipodes and became a celebrated author with over 40 books to his credit.

There was also the Stockwell Orphanage, of which even such a critic of Spurgeon's uncompromising Calvinist theology as the renowned Dr. Joseph Parker was to say, "When I look at the orphanage.... all is beauty and love." The tabernacle also operated an inner city mission in the city of London.

Oblivious to fame, not soured by criticism

It is indeed remarkable that throughout his ministry Spurgeon remained unmoved by the adulation of those who consistently thronged his services nor did his pulpit successes change him or create conceit. Therefore, his name began to be frequently lampooned by the press, criticized by fellow preachers and "kicked about the street as a football," he was not unduly upset by the criticism. Spurgeon was ever the servant of the Lord and his congregations. People came to the Tabernacle expecting his Puritan theology and they received this in both his public utterances and personal life. The Spurgeon of the pulpit was essentially the Spurgeon of the home parlour.

It was of course the preacher

in Spurgeon that attracted the crowds that regularly thronged the Metropolitan Tabernacle. This man, who "mouthing rolling periods, piling metaphor upon metaphor" with speech totally committed to the Word of God, had a remarkable capacity to absorb the contents of books, most of them profound, and translate them into the language of the person in the pew. Said a contemporary, "He took in the contents almost at a glance and his memory never failed him as to what he read."

At his death Spurgeon had a library of 12,000 books and, it was said that "he could have fetched almost any one of them in the dark." It was also claimed — accurately — that Mr. Spurgeon at one time could name as he sat upon his platform every one of his 5,000 church members!

Spurgeon, while a serious preacher, did not hesitate to use

humour in his messages. He once cautioned his students regarding the ministry, "You are not to make a fortune for yourself. Anyway, I do not think you will be likely to do that in the Baptist ministry!"

This man was no preaching lightweight, all oratory and no substance. His was serious pulpiteering and he prepared assiduously for services which centred around his great biblical expositions.

Aversion to statistics

Worship at the Tabernacle lacked professional musicians and had no choir, organ or soloists. A presentor lead the hymn singing. Spurgeon's style of worship had no public appeal for converts and the great preacher distrusted the use of statistics, remarking during an 1887 sermon, "Long

Continued on p. 14...

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Charles Haddon Spurgeon: forgotten giant of the English pulpit

...continued from p. 13
ago I ceased to count heads."

He took issue with the Moody and Sankey British missions over publication of numbers of crowds and converts, especially the latter. When one reflects that Billy Sunday once vulgarly boasted that his converts only cost two dollars a head, and witnessing the modern trend toward numbers rather than individuals, Spurgeon's aversion to the use of statistics becomes prophetic.

This man who became known after his death as "the last of the Puritans" was an unabashed Calvinist in his theology. He was Puritan in his belief in total depravity and Calvinist in his theology of original sin. This insistence upon Calvinist belief was the source of much controversy during his ministry but he held to it. John Anderson said of him that "he preaches salvation not of man's free will but of the Lord's good will which few in London, it is to be feared, now do." It was inevitable that a public figure

such as Spurgeon, who broke religious tradition, would invite periodic controversy, the more so because he was not averse to speaking out on issues of the day.

Stern hyper-Calvinists criticized the youthful preacher for his perceived deviation from the Reformer's theology. On the other hand, Spurgeon's unrelenting opposition to the Methodist view of Arminianism with its emphasis upon human free will, universal atonement and modified predestination brought him intense criticism as well. This was utterly opposed to his own Calvinism with its doctrine of divine election and predestination. Spurgeon's preaching showed the results of a lifelong devotion to the writings of the great Puritan divines.

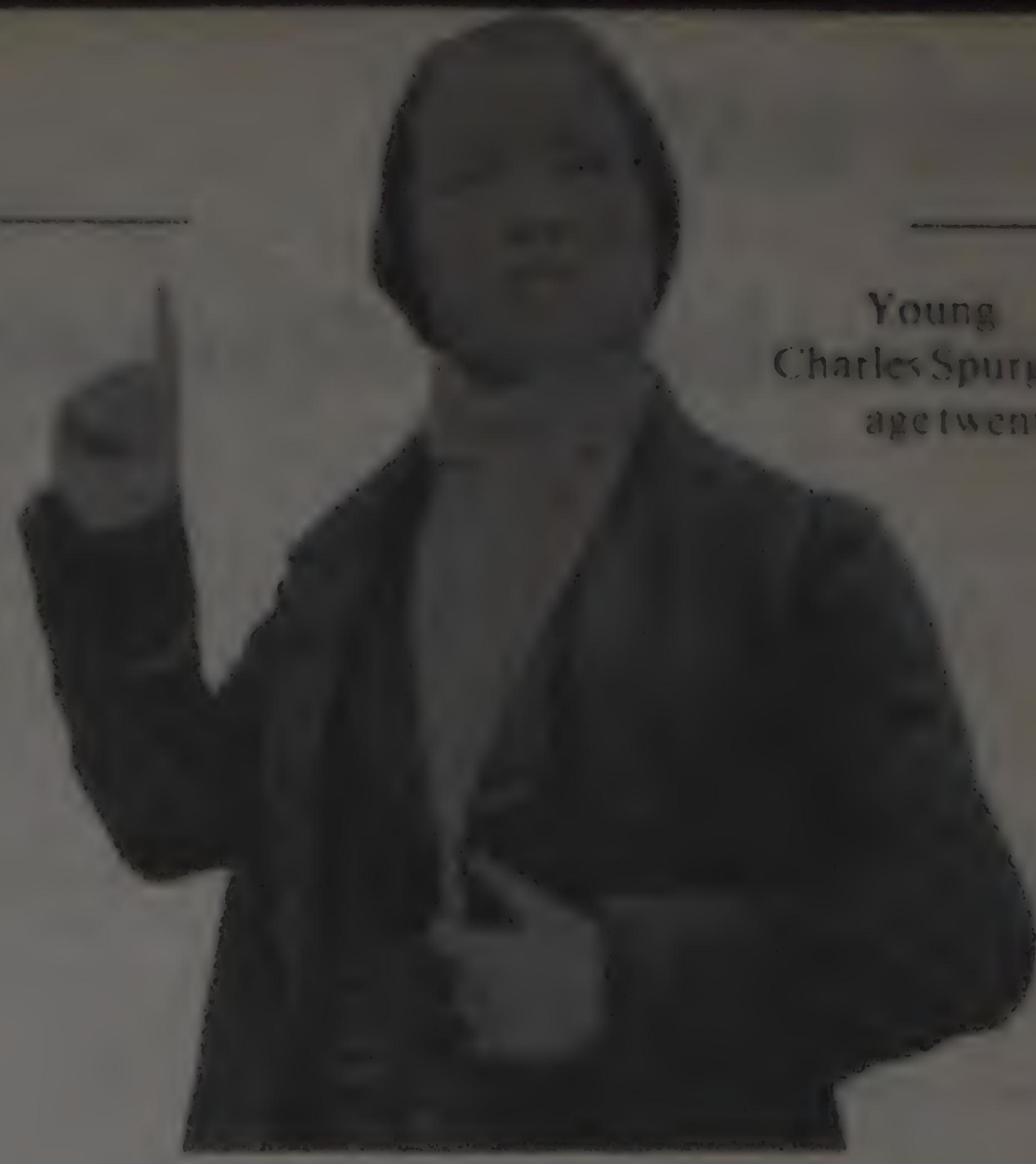
Spurgeon's brand of evangelicalism often differed from many contemporaries. He distrusted the use of statistics, public appeals for decisions and the use of inquiry rooms. His feeling was that such customs showed distrust

of the work of God's Spirit and led to superficiality in the church.

The great Tractarian controversy of 1864, though brief, was hurricane-like in its effect upon English religious life. Like many free church clergy, Spurgeon was suspicious of the intrusion of the state upon church life and even more so of the trend in the Anglican communion toward baptismal regeneration. His sermon of June 5, 1864, on the subject soon saw 350,000 copies in print and sparked a multitude of replies from both defenders of the idea and from evangelicals who were offended by Spurgeon's refusal to differentiate between Catholic Tractarianism and the Anglican prayer book.

Spurgeon did not deviate from his position that the Roman and Anglican communions were closely linked, the latter being a stepping stone to the other.

The final great controversy before Spurgeon's death at Mentone in France was the



Young
Charles Spurgeon,
age twenty.

"down grade" dispute. This concerned the rise of "Higher Criticism" in the Protestant churches and the response of the evangelicals toward it. Spurgeon's view was that the decline in church attendance reflected the skepticism of the clergy. He asked, "have these advanced thinkers filled their own chapels? Have they...prospered through discarding the old methods?"

He withdrew his church from the Baptist Union in 1887 because in his view the Union preferred denominational peace to dealing with the issue of liberal theology. What disturbed the great preacher was that many evangelicals were non-doctrinal and thus

were exposing themselves to the error and devastation of liberalism and Higher Criticism.

Spurgeon's funeral on Feb. 4, 1892, was one of the largest seen in London for years, with vast crowds thronging the road leading to Norwood Cemetery. Today, on the eve of the 100th anniversary of his death, there is renewed interest in the man who was known as the "last of the Puritans." Spurgeon's Metropolitan Tabernacle sermons are in reprint and his autobiography and "An All Round Ministry" are popular once again.

Paul Murray is a freelance writer living in Barrie, Ont.

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Your continued support will be greatly appreciated.

**Deadline for advertisements in
the Christmas issue is November 22!!!**

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Cost: \$400 + GST = \$428.00

4) Half Page — Size 10" x 7 1/2"
Cost: \$700 + GST = \$749.00

5) Full Page — Size 10" x 15"
Cost: \$1200 + GST = \$1284.00

6) Sponsorship Advertising

I do not wish to place my own ad, but will gladly sponsor a Christian organization advertisement. I understand Calvinist Contact will obtain copy from the organization indicated.

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Please enclose your ad copy with this coupon.

I enclose payment

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Return by November 22 to: Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
(Fax: 416-682-8313)

News/Advice

Drawing blood isn't always an unfriendly act

AMERICAN RED CROSS
CHAPTER OPEN HOUSE OCTOBER 18, 1991
3-6 PM

Decorating 75 Years
Niagara Falls Chapter 1916 - 1991

American Red Cross

C.C. Staff

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. — There's a lot of bloodletting going on in the world but some of it isn't vicious or destructive; in fact, sometimes it's downright life-saving and its "victims" are voluntary.

That's the case with Ed Cassidy, husband of C.C., associate editor Marian Van Til. Cassidy was honoured a few weeks ago by the American Red Cross as a member of its

"Century Club" — for those who have given blood at least 100 times. At last count, Ed has donated 112 units of blood (that's 14 American gallons). He says he's happy to help others in that way, has been giving blood since the late 1970s and sees no reason to stop now.

The local chapter of the Red Cross where Cassidy donates blood is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year.

Ontario human rights groups get more funding

TORONTO — The Ontario government has allocated an extra \$6.4 million to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) to deal with its caseload of approximately 2,600 formal complaints. The catch-up money will pay for a special backlog-elimination team and also an immediate review of its strategic planning, management and accountability structures, staff training and customer service.

The OHRC, an "arm's-length" government agency which reports through the Ministry of Citizenship, is responsible for enforcing the 1981 Human Rights Code which protects Ontario residents from discrimination. The code itself is currently being reviewed by the provincial government.



Peter and Marja are



Dear Readers:

In September we received a letter from someone who asked whether a Christian lawyer could or would ever defend a client whom he knew to be guilty but who wanted to plead innocent. We threw this issue out to our readership and invited their input. An older reader and a lawyer responded in writing. A third person, also a lawyer, has elected to write a longer response as an article in an upcoming issue of Calvinist Contact.

Dear P & M:

For older readers the name Seyss Inquart will ring a bell. He represented the German Reich from May 1940 to the end of the war and his tyrannical rule is well known.

After the war, justice brought him into a court of law. His defendant was a Dutch lawyer who had lost a brother-in-law in a concentration camp. This lawyer also happened to be Roman Catholic. I don't recall his name but I do remember that he worked very hard and conscientiously to defend the Nazi client. He made every effort to see to it that only the law, not emotions, would decide the outcome.

Dear P & M:

I find it difficult to accept that someone, Christian or otherwise, would never defend someone he knew to be guilty but who wanted to plead innocent. In Canada, and in England as far as I know, every person charged with a criminal offence is innocent until proven guilty. This is a fundamental cornerstone of criminal law.

The lawyer who determines a client's legal guilt has usurped the function of the judge or jury. A lawyer may recommend that a client plead guilty and often should make such a recommendation where he is of the opinion that the client will be proven guilty at trial and has no apparent defense in law. However, it

remains the client's absolute right to proceed to trial and have a court determine legal guilt or innocence after a full hearing on the evidence is presented. That's how legal guilt is determined. Such guilt is not to be confused with moral guilt.

A plea of innocence is merely an affirmation of the principle that everyone is innocent until proven guilty.

Dear Readers:

A guilty person's right to protection, defence and a trial has biblical precedent in the six cities of refuge described in Numbers 35 and Joshua 20. The Lord clearly detests both "acquitting the guilty and condemning the innocent" (Prov. 17:15). But acquittal and condemnation are legal verdicts that come at the conclusion of a trial, and not one moment before. God saw to it that an "avenger of blood" would not get in the way of justice.

In the process leading to acquittal or sentencing, a lawyer is neither judge nor jury. He speaks for the defendant and in that sense is legally and morally bound to clearly and convincingly articulate what his client wants the court to hear. For those moments in court, he is the defendant. There are times when this causes great inner turmoil for a lawyer; but Justice must be served and she holds a scale with two sides that must both be heard.

Our thanks to the two readers who took the time to write.

Write to: P & M
c/o Calvinist Contact
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Shutska are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of: Sam DeSalvo, Jackie Brouwer, Parley Act, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

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TEL. & FAX: (416) 455-0797

Classified

Classified rates	Thanks	Anniversaries	Anniversaries	Obituaries
GST Inclusive Births.....\$35.00 Marriages & Engagements.....\$40.00 Anniversaries.....\$45.00 2-column anniversaries.....\$90.00 Obituaries.....\$45.00 Notes of thanks.....\$35.00 Birthdays.....\$35.00 All other one-column classified advertisements: \$13.50 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$25.00. Letter under file number, \$35.00 extra. Photos: \$25.00 additional charge. (Free when published with anniversary announcement celebrating 50 years or more). Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive. ATTENTION! a) <i>Calvinist Contact</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format, unless you instruct us otherwise. b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion. c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original. d) <i>Calvinist Contact</i> will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements. e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to six column inches. <i>Calvinist Contact</i> reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$13.50 per column inch (GST inclusive). NEWLYWEDS Non-subscribing newlyweds whose wedding announcement with their future address appears in <i>Calvinist Contact</i> will receive a letter offering a first-year subscription for only \$20.00 (GST inclusive)! To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request and pay for the wedding announcement to enclose \$20.00 and the couple's future address.	VERBRUGGEN: We would like to express a sincere thank you to all our friends for the cards, flowers, visits and phone calls we received after the recent passing away of our husband, father and grandfather, Cornelis Verbruggen. Your prayers, kindness and sympathy were very much appreciated. Mrs. Adriana Verbruggen and family.		Congratulations to Tom and Nellie Scholman (nee Balder) who will celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary!	On Oct. 13, 1991, the Lord called home our grandson, nephew and cousin, LEONARD BYDEVAATE at the age of 32 years. He was predeceased by his father, Chris, on Feb. 12, 1990. Lovingly remembered by his oma, uncles, aunts and cousins: Oma Vander Kooij — Brampton, Ont. Harry & Klaaske Vander Kooij — Holland Marsh, Ont. Sara & John Veenstra — Smithers, B.C. Pete & Leni Vander Kooij — Bradford, Ont. Corrie & Harry Langendoen — Elmira, Ont. Audrey & Harry Kruisselbrink — Smithers, B.C. margaret & Piet Mostert — Ariss, Ont. John & Lita Vander Kooij — Pottageville, Ont. Chris Vander Kooij — Aurora, Ont. and 25 cousins. God took to him our friend and member, META VAN BAREN on Oct. 29, 1991, at the age of 71. Our prayers are that God will comfort and strengthen her husband and family. The Men's and Ladies' Society of First and Shalom Chr. Ref. Churches, Brantford, Ont.
Calvinist Contact Publishing Ltd. 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (416) 682-8311 Fax: (416) 682-8313	Anniversaries 1956 November 14 1991 With praise and thanks to God, we are pleased to announce the 35th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents, ANDY and JANE BROUWER (nee De Jong) We are grateful for the love and care you have shown to each other and given to us over the years. May the Lord bless you richly as you continue to be a blessing to all of us. With love, Gary & Leona Brouwer Tara, Jeffrey, Timmy Caroline & Ed Dyk Caitlin Winnefred & Bernie Wiebenga Alex, Matthew Ken Brouwer Home address: R.R. #2, Newmarket, ON L3Y 4V9 Wolvega Whitby 1946 November 14 1991 With joy and thanksgiving to God, we are happy to announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents, BOUWE and YNTSKE EENLING (nee Hoogeveen) With love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren: George & Lena Eenling Peter & Thea Eenling Rob & Betty Stinson Ken & Cathy Goring and nine grandchildren. An open house will be held at the Hebron Chr. Ref. Church in Whitby, Ont., on Nov. 16, 1991, from 1 - 4 p.m. Home address: 3385 Brock St. N., Whitby, ON L1N 5R5	1966 November 19 1991 With thanks to God we wish to announce the 25th wedding anniversary of our parents, TOM and NELLIE SCHOLMAN (nee Balder) It is our hope and prayer that the Lord will continue to surround them with his love and bless them as they have truly been a blessing to us. Margaret & Ron Fedders — Sioux Center, Iowa Jeff & Lisa Scholman — Smithville, Ont. Jacqueline Wayne Laura Richard Home address: 5501 Mountainview Road, Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2	Obituaries The Hague Whitby April 4, 1910 Oct. 25, 1991 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12). The Lord, in his infinite wisdom and at his time, brought home his faithful servant, our beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather and brother, JOHN VAN HARMELEN at the age of 81. Husband of: Elisabeth Van Harmelen (nee Lagerwey) Father of: Joanne & Alvin Beukema — Abbotsford, B.C. Peter & Karl (Caitlin, Taryn, Stephen), Betty-Lyn, Veronica & Arnold (Robbie, Jason, Malorie, Amanda), Susan & Mark (Daniel, Timmy), Sandra. Ellen & John Van Til — London, Ont. Gloria & Brian, Ralph (Jessica), John & Joanne (Rebecca), Elaine, Brenda Cor Van Harmelen — Sarasota, Fla. Marci (Rebecca, Amber), Mark Andy & Gerda Van Harmelen — Whitby, Ont. Lisa, Jeff, Laura Ann Brother of: Annie Van Harmelen — Abbotsford, B.C. Dad faithfully served the congregations of Harkstede, Marrum, Amstelveen, Garyp and Assen in the Netherlands, and Brampton, Whitby, London and Woodstock in Canada. During the 40 years of his active ministry he preached a "rich Christ for poor sinners," helped numerous immigrants in a practical way, served on many Boards and Committees and wrote articles for various Christian publications. Although the last few years of his life were not easy, due to his illness, the Lord spared him from suffering, and we as family can look back on a rich life full of service. It is our comfort that Dad is now rejoicing in the Lord's presence. The funeral took place Oct. 29, 1991, at the Hebron Chr. Ref. Church of Whitby, with the interment at the Mount Lawn Cemetery in Whitby. Correspondence address: #807-100 Glen Hill Dr. S., Whitby, ON L1N 8R4	For Sale Three-rank unified pipe organ with solid oak detached console. 32-note concave radiating pedal, two manuals, 30 stops, suitable for home, school or small church. Asking price \$25,000.00. John H. Bergman 291 Buller St. Woodstock, ON N4S 4M6 Phone: (519) 537-3058
Births BERGSTRA: Caitlin, Peter, and Graham are all excited about the arrival of their baby sister, WILMA MARLYSE Her proud parents are Tom and Wilma Bergstra (nee VanderLugt) and equally proud grandparents are Mr. and Mrs. J. Bergstra of Shallow Lake, Ont., and Mr. and Mrs. M. Van Waveren of Veenendaal, the Netherlands. Praise God for the precious gift of new life! Home address: T. Bergstra, 1065 Telfer Rd., Sarnia, ON N7T 7H2	Personal Gentleman in mid-twenties, living in Ontario (farmer), would like to correspond and meet a Christian young lady. Reply under File #2575, c/o <i>Calvinist Contact</i> , 261, Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Widow, 58 years old, Reformed, living in the Toronto area, would like to meet an honest, sincere, non-smoking gentleman between 58 and 62 years old. I love animals, reading and a warm home life. Please respond with picture to File # 2574, c/o <i>Calvinist Contact</i> , 261 Martindale Rd., Unit 4, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 For Sale For sale: Broiler Chicken Farm , on paved road St. Mary's — Stratford area. Basic quota 22,500 units. Excellent buildings and equipment. Buildings heated by natural gas. 1 1/2 storey, 4 bedroom renovated home. Small acreage, survey available. Asking \$635,000.00. Owners retiring. Inspect and try your offer! Contact: Peter Damsma, Clinton, Ont. 519-482-9849 RES. Wilfred McIntee & Co. Limited, Clinton, Ont. 519-482-5991 FAX 519-482-9343	1951 November 22 1991 With joy and thankfulness to God we rejoice with our parents and grandparents, PETER and CORRY VENEMA on the occasion of their 40th wedding anniversary. With love and congratulations: Charly & Helen Venema Melanie, Peter, Selena Grace & John Pasma Rachael, Jeremy, Gregory, Tim Renee & Dick Saarloos Benjamin, Janelle, Valerie, David Carla & John Oudijk Christopher, Nathaniel Family and friends are invited to an open house to be held D.V. on Saturday, Nov. 23, 1991, from 2 - 3:30 p.m., at the First Chr. Ref. Church, St. Thomas, Ontario. Best wishes only. Home address: 15 Chant St., St. Thomas, ON N5R 4Y6	JOHN and MARGARET VREKEN (nee VanderFlier) celebrated with our children, grandchildren, family and friends our 40th wedding anniversary. Rom. 8:37-39. Our children: John & Debbie — St. Catharines, Ont. Alex, Emily, Elise Fred & Hennie — St. Catharines, Ont. David, Andrea, Halyna Home address: 18 Grosvenor St., St. Catharines, ON L2M 3E2	HAMMOND RT3 Concert Model Organ with American Guild of Organist. 32 key Pedal Board. Complete with Leslie Speaker and Hammond Tone Cabinet. \$3,000 or best offer. Bethel Chr. Ref. Church, Waterdown, Ont. Contact: Bill Vander Kruk (416) 689-6984 or Hans Vander Stoep (416) 522-8602.
DEGELDER: With joy and thanks to the Lord, Rita and Peter DeGelder of Mt. Bridges, Ont., announce the birth of their new grandson, EVAN RICHARD born on Oct. 29, 1991, son of Jack and Betsy DeGelder of Brighton, Mich. A baby brother for Alex. Second grandson for Martha and Bob Landgren of Grand Rapids, Mich. Evan is welcomed by his cousins Kelly, Charlotte and Stephanie DeGelder of Holland, Mich., and by Katie DeGelder of Kalamazoo, Mich. 18th great-grandchild for Mrs. Wilma VanderStelt, Holland Chr. Homes, Brampton, Ont.				Help Wanted Support Counselling Staff Position Social Work diploma or relevant BA. Experience helpful. Excellent communication, writing skills, lead groups and teach life skills, counselling aimed at empowerment. Must understand vision of Project. Shift work, start December. Resume's by Nov. 12, 1991, to: Executive Director Bethlehem Place 58 Welland Ave., St. Catharines, ON L2R 2MS
				For Rent For rent in Spring Hill, Florida, two-bedroom mobile home; ten min. from beach. \$500 U.S. a month. Call (416) 387-1160 after 4:00 p.m.

Events/Classified

Teachers	Teachers	Events	Events	Miscellaneous
<p>LONDON, Ont.: London District Christian Secondary School requires a French language teacher (part- or full-time), to fill a six-month maternity leave, beginning Jan. 6, 1992. Please send letter of application and resume, by Nov. 15, to Mr. H. Kooy, Principal, c/o LDCSS 24 Braeside Ave., London, ON N5W 1V3. Phone: (519) 455-4360.</p>	<p>OSHAWA, Ont.: Immanuel Chr. School, is accepting applications for the position of teaching principal, to commence with the 1992/93 school year. Please direct all inquiries and resumes to: Ann Mars, c/o Immanuel Chr. School, 849 Rossland Rd., West, Oshawa, ON L1H 7K4.</p>		<p>ICS PUBLIC CONVOCATION and INAUGURAL LECTURE</p> <p>The Institute for Christian Studies invites you to a Public Convocation for the graduation of Junior Members and the Inaugural Lecture of Dr. Robert Sweetman, Senior Member in the History of Philosophy, "Tracing the shape of wonder, or, medieval miracles for a post-modern age."</p> <p>Friday, November 15, 1991, at 7:30 p.m. at Knox College Chapel, 59 St. George St., Toronto. Reception to follow.</p>	<p>Want to rent a car while in Holland?</p> <p>Jan Kalma has the key to all forms of car rentals.</p> <p>Will deliver car to Amsterdam airport if desired.</p> <p>jan kalma De Meer 24, 9201 EZ Drachten The Netherlands — Tel. (31) 5120-15195 Fax (31) 5120-32324</p>

EDMONTON CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS Employment Opportunity

The Edmonton Christian School system is a progressive school system operating three elementary junior-high schools and one senior-high school.

One full-time high school teacher is required to teach English 30/33, Religious Meanings, Accounting 10 and Business Education 10, beginning January 1, 1992.

Applicants may respond, on or before November 15, to:

Stuart Williams
Edmonton Christian High School
14304-109 Ave., Edmonton, AB T5N 1H6
Phone (403) 454-0791

The position will be filled as soon as a suitable applicant is found.

Events

COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY CONCERNS (CRC) PUBLIC MEETING

When: Friday, Nov. 15, 1991, at 7:30 p.m.

Place: Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont.

Purpose: To share ideas on how to provide full participation of people with disabilities (physical or emotional) in the church. Everyone is welcome! The meeting will be chaired by Mr. Jerry Van Spronsen, Program Developer with the Committee on Disability Concerns (CRC).

Miscellaneous

NETHERLANDS BAZAAR RAISES \$76,000

The Committee "Netherlands Bazaar" expresses its deepest thanks to all the contributors and supporters of the 1991 Netherlands Bazaar. During November the committee is gathering the names for Christmas food parcels. We would like to ask that, if you know of anyone who is in severe need, you advise one of the persons listed below no later than Monday, November 25.

It is thanks to you that we were able to raise the overwhelming amount of \$76,000 and, although you cannot see the faces of the grateful recipients, you are the ones that will be scattering kindness and delight to the many discouraged of Dutch descent in Ontario. Again, our sincere thanks!

Telephone the following for parcel information: Lenie Gehrels (225-5217), Wil Meulmeester (221-5885), Jenny Olthoff (282-9228), Ge Spaans (477-1243), or write to:

Committee "Netherlands Bazaar"
15 Pavilion Street,
Unionville, ON L3R 1N8

Help Wanted

GROUNDS KEEPER/SECURITY

AVAILABLE: December 1, 1991.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

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- clearing sidewalks/entrances in winter
- security for plant and sales centre

IDEAL for a retiree.

ACCOMMODATION available, if required.
Please contact the Personnel Department:

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K9J 8J6
(705) 295-4101

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to develop programs to challenge our youth to active participation in the Christian life.

Education, training and experience in youth ministry are desirable. Excellent employment and housing benefits will be provided. More information and a church profile are available upon request.

Resumes can be sent to:

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L2W 1A1

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- We need tradespeople to build two simple houses
- Time schedule: January 1992
- Cost of trip and stay: appr. \$1,000

Please phone as soon as possible! For more information contact:

Gary Prinsen (416) 935-7690
Peter Guetter (416) 892-3784
John Pippel (519) 485-0193

Events/News

Millions still stranded by China floods

ANHUI province, China (WVC) — Millions of people are still stranded, huddled under temporary shelters and in shacks on dikes, three months after China's worst flood in centuries. It hit 20 of 31 provinces and affected 320 million people, says Don Scott, president of World Vision Canada, who has just returned from Anhui province in southeast China. World Vision is an international Christians humanitarian relief and development agency.

"The flood affected 80 per cent of Anhui province where more than 13 million people lost almost all they had," says Scott.

World Vision, the only private agency providing relief shelters, has already built durable brick homes for 70,000 people in this poor province with an annual per capita income of \$70.

"We lost everything except my family," says Kwai-Chun Cheng of Hanying county.

This 35-year-old farmer's wife received an emergency brick home from World Vision in co-operation with the county, but many families still go without. Official estimates say over four million homes were damaged across China, half of them totally destroyed.

"Inch by inch as the water recedes each day the land is reclaimed by hungry farmers planting new crops of rice and vegetables. Three months after the rain started — at times as hard as three inches per hour — millions of square kilometres of fertile farm land still remain submerged," says Scott. "But winter is coming on, bringing temperatures of -10 to -20 degrees Celsius. World Vision wants to ensure that all the shelters are completed in time."

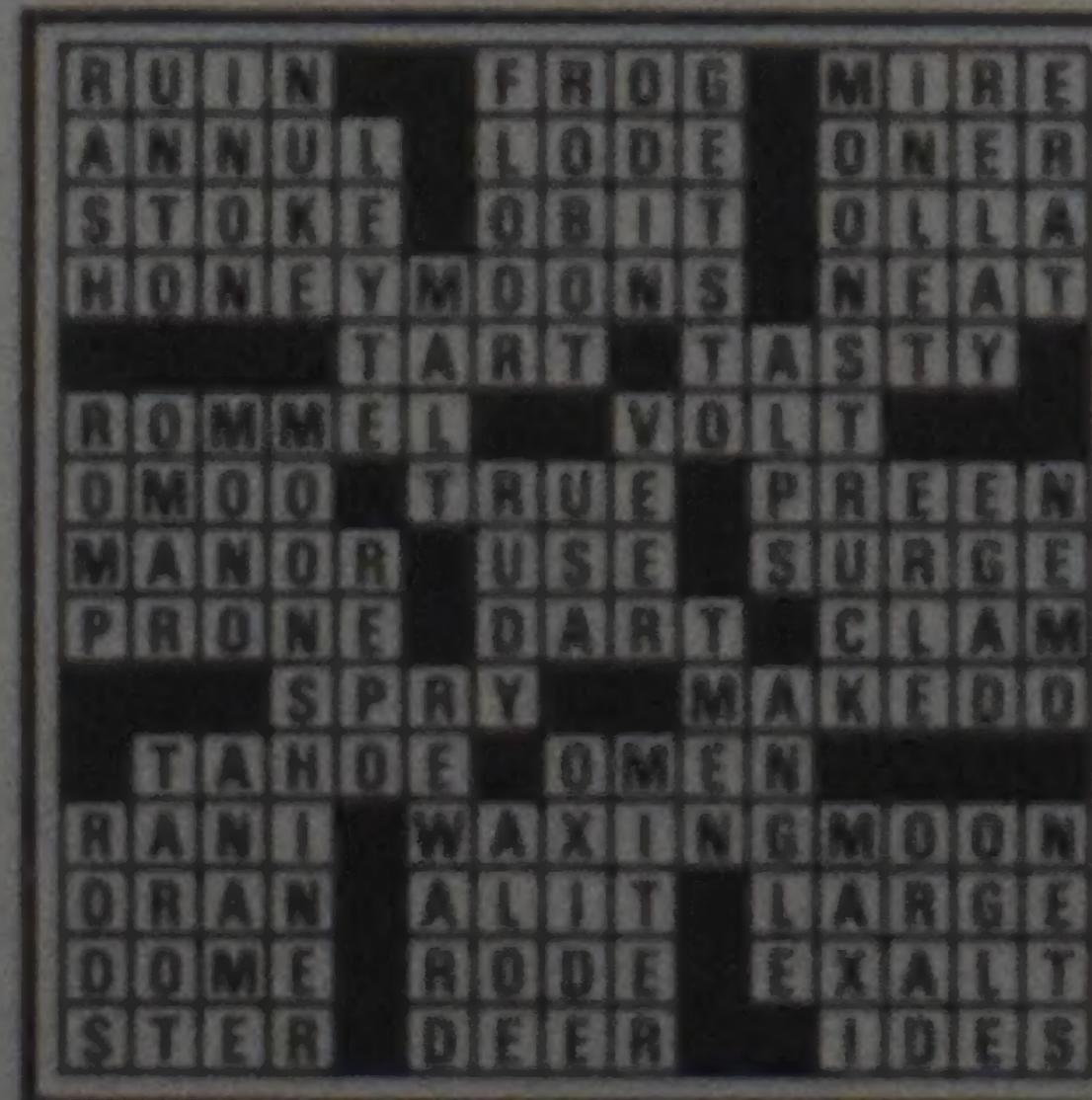
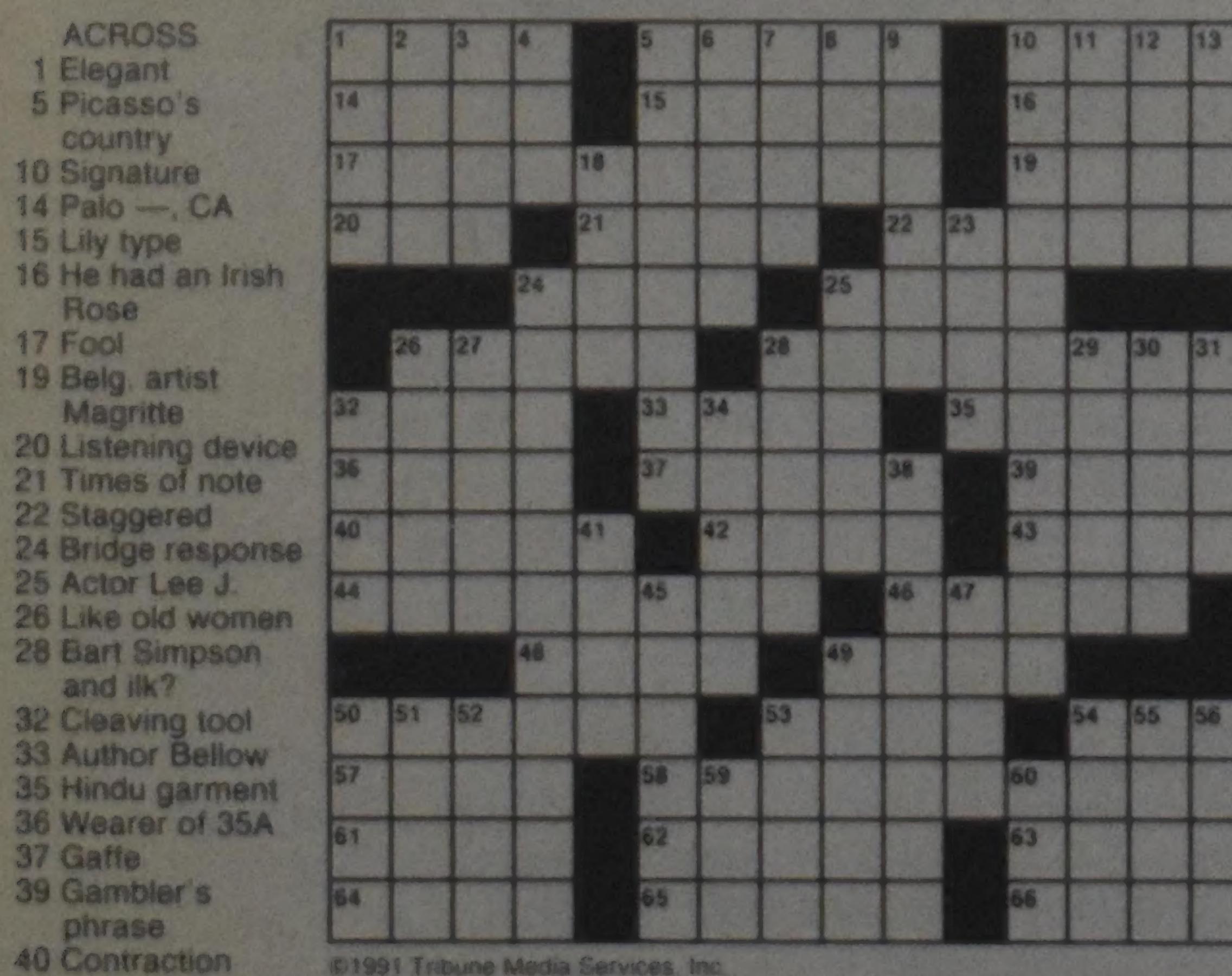
In addition to shelters, World Vision's office in China has responded with emergency food and blankets. World Vision is already building 34 village clinics and 13 schools in Luan and Shouxian County.

The most news on the Netherlands and the Dutch in Canada and the USA the Windmill

Ontario: P.O. Box 1064, Sta 'B', Rexdale, ON, M9V 2B3
Telephone (416)287-6487 (between 12:00 a.m. & 8:00 p.m.)
Western Canada: P.O. Bag 9033, Surrey, BC, V3T 4X3
USA: P.O. Box 591, Lynden, WA 98264
Telephone: (604)597-2144 (9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Weekly puzzle

by C.F. Murray



Nov. 9	Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., St. George's Anglican Church, Guelph, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Joel Nederhood with the OCMA (dir. by Leendert Kooij) and organist Andre Knevel.	Nov. 16	Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, Lethbridge, Alta. Speaker: Rev. Juan Boonstra.
Nov. 9-10	"Partnership in the Gospel VI" conference at the Hilton and Calvin Seminary Auditorium, Grand Rapids, Mich. Speaker: Rev. Marchiene Rienstra. For info, call (616)454-4888.	Nov. 18	Christian Festival Concert at 8 p.m. in Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto, Ont. Presented by the Ontario Christian Music Assembly, Andre Knevel and Dirk Out (piano and organ), Etty van der Mei (soprano), the Kooij Sisters, all under the direction of Leendert Kooij. For tickets call (416) 636-9779.
Nov. 10	"Dutch Marine Veterans" participate in Remembrance Day Parade in Aurora, Ont. Assembly at Aurora Shopping Plaza at 10 a.m.	Nov. 20-Dec. 4	CSS's Adriana Pierik plans to be in the Lower Fraser Valley and Vancouver Island area.
Nov. 11	One-day conference of the Council of C.R. Churches in Canada (CCRC), 2 p.m., Third CRC, Edmonton, Alta. Keynote speaker: Rev. Jack Vos. Theme: "Structuring the CRC in Canada for Distinctive Service."	Nov. 23	Giant bazaar at Calvin Mem. Chr. School, St. Catharines, Ont. Doors open at 10 a.m. Everyone welcome!
Nov. 12	Organ concert by Andre Knevel on the new organ of Cathedral of St. Catherine, 67 Church St., St. Catharines, Ont. Starts 8 p.m.	Nov. 27-28	18th Annual convention of the Chr. Farmers Fed. of Alberta at the Maria Goretti Community Centre, 11050-90 Street, Edmonton, Alta. For info, call (403)428-6981 or 421-8382.
Nov. 13	District meeting of Hamilton-area Chr. Ref. Women, 8 p.m., First CRC, Hamilton, Ont. Speaker: Dr. Payton (Redeemer College) on: "Blessed are the Peacemakers."	Nov. 30	Choir and organ concert by the OCMA (director Leendert Kooij), with organist Andre Knevel, 8 p.m., St. Thomas Anglican Church, St. Catharines, Ont.
Nov. 14	Back to God Hour Rally, 7:30 p.m., West End CRC, Edmonton, Alta. Mass choirs and male chorus. Speaker: Rev. Juan Boonstra.	Dec. 4	Annual Tea & Craft Sale, from 1-4 p.m., at Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont. Everyone welcome. For info, call (416) 945-9631.
Nov. 15	ICS Public Convocation and Inaugural Lecture of Dr. Robert Sweetman, 7:30 p.m., Knox College Chapel, 59 St. George St., Toronto, Ont. Reception follows.		Canadian Chr. Business Federation (formerly RCBPO) dinner evening with Free University's Dr. Bob Goudzwaard. Reception at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. at the Novotel (Hurontario & Burnhamthorpe), Mississauga, Ont. For reservations call (416) 524-1203 by Dec. 2, noon.
Nov. 15-16	Back to God Hour Rally, 8 p.m., First CRC, Red Deer, Alta. Speaker: Rev. Juan Boonstra.		
Nov. 16	Toronto Conference on Reformed Theology on the theme: "The Goodness of God." At Knox Presb. Church, 630 Spadina Ave., Toronto, Ont. Speakers: James M. Boice, Ronald N. Gleason and Joel Nederhood. For info, call Richard Van Seters at (416)477-2266, Fax (416)477-2268.		
	Annual membership meeting of Salem Chr. Mental Health Assoc. at Redeemer College, Aneaster, Ont. Registration: 9:30 a.m. Speaker: Edward Hagedorn. Lunch is provided.		

Calendar of events

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Nov. 23	Giant bazaar at Calvin Mem. Chr. School, St. Catharines, Ont. Doors open at 10 a.m. Everyone welcome!
Nov. 27-28	18th Annual convention of the Chr. Farmers Fed. of Alberta at the Maria Goretti Community Centre, 11050-90 Street, Edmonton, Alta. For info, call (403)428-6981 or 421-8382.
Nov. 30	Choir and organ concert by the OCMA (director Leendert Kooij), with organist Andre Knevel, 8 p.m., St. Thomas Anglican Church, St. Catharines, Ont.
Dec. 4	Annual Tea & Craft Sale, from 1-4 p.m., at Shalom Manor, Grimsby, Ont. Everyone welcome. For info, call (416) 945-9631.
	Canadian Chr. Business Federation (formerly RCBPO) dinner evening with Free University's Dr. Bob Goudzwaard. Reception at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m. at the Novotel (Hurontario & Burnhamthorpe), Mississauga, Ont. For reservations call (416) 524-1203 by Dec. 2, noon.

Church News Christian Reformed Church

New place of worship

The Bethel CRC, Brockville, Ont., is now meeting for worship services at the Wall Street United Church, 5 Wall St., Brockville. Services are held at 8:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Bethel will meet as above for an indefinite period — until its new building is completed.

This is the organ

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*This price is only for the months of Nov. and Dec. and only as long as supply lasts.

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Books

Robert VanderVennen, page editor

A heritage of folk tales

The Eleventh Commandment: Mennonite Low German Short Stories, by Jack Thiessen, re-worked and translated by Andreas Schroeder, Saskatoon: Thistledown Press, 1990. Softcover, 120 pages. Reviewed by Curt Gesch, Smithers, B.C.

If you enjoy superb story-telling...

if you find laughing at yourself therapeutic... if you don't mind admitting that the most saintly leaders of your community may sometimes be "moved" to curse like a hockey player... if you love stories about immigrants... then RUN, don't walk,

to your nearest bookstore and order *The Eleventh Commandment*. These stories were collected, "re-worked and translated" by Andreas Schroeder, himself a well-known Canadian author.

This collection appears to be Schroeder's attempt to preserve the flavour, if not the language, of the *Platt-Deutsch* oral story-telling tradition. Thiessen's tales are hilarious, moving, perplexing... as complex as human life.

Although these stories are set in the context of Mennonite immigrant societies in Canada, like all good literature, they are simply true-to-human-life.

There are stories of revenge (how Klassen fixes the neighbour children who are stealing his melons), hypocrisy (Preacher Krause who suddenly uses God's name in a different way when enticed into a hornet's nest), human strength (Aunt Margaret finally dies after eating her last meal for about twenty years), and plans gone wrong (Peter Reimer's attempt to help Hans with some "Dutch courage" as preparation for his wedding ceremony). Notably and sadly absent are stories of the deep piety of Mennonite Christians.

Those readers of *Calvinist Contact* who are immigrants from the Netherlands will find many familiar situations described in these stories. Why, did they kick bachelor Peter out of the Eden Mennonite Church? And what is a real Mennonite? Is the Mennonite Brethren group the only true church, or are General Conference Mennonites saved, too? Does a billfold with a case of constipation at pay-up time indicate true faith? And so on.

The Eleventh Commandment will remind some of us of Sietze Buning's folksy tales. Those familiar with Jewish stories — notably those of the late Isaac Singer — will recognize the same gutsy, salty, simple, profound, entertaining treatments. (One of Thiessen's tales, "The Cobbler's Bench," is strikingly similar to Singer's longer tale,

"The little Shoemakers.") And tales is what these stories are. We owe great thanks to Schroeder for transferring so much of the nature of the oral tale to a written form in a different language.

Perhaps this collection can also help us reconsider the decay of our own oral traditions. Who will replace some of our great story-tellers and raconteurs?

Husband (delighted with a surprise gift he has received from his Christian community): "But how did you know to get me this — just the right thing?" Bert van der Hoek (Agassiz, B.C.): "Well...let's say we plowed with your heifer."

And while you, dear reader, worry about your problems, I'll just sit here...

"In 1936 it was so horribly hot and so dreadfully dry, that many people thought the Day of Judgment had finally come. In the barn the chicks gaped open-beaked for air and water, and the ducks rejoiced if you so much as spat at them. The frogs in the ditches all sang bass, and at the Peter Schellenberg farm they were so short of water, the cows gave butter dumplings instead of milk. Even the churches had to make adjustments; it was so dry that the Mennonite Brethren started baptising with a water-jug, while the General conference issued rain checks...."



Friends of God

Wayne Brouwer

A new song

"Sing to the Lord a new song!" (Ps. 98:1)

I used to greet people by cheerfully calling out to them, "What's new?" That was before a motorcycle-driving friend of mine, a loner by nature and introspective by choice, shared with me his enormous fascination for the popular 1970's best-seller, *Zen and the art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. Author Robert Pirsig cut me down to size in that book when he said, "What's new?" is an interesting and broadening eternal question, but one which, if pursued exclusively, results only in an endless parade of trivia and fashion, the silt of tomorrow."

"....An endless parade of trivia?" "....The silt of tomorrow?" You can see why I changed my habits after being critiqued like that! Now I use the pastoral politeness of "How are you doing?" when I meet friends.

Fad

But it beckons us every day. The Squire in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* said that "men love...new fangledness." It's true, isn't it? Marketing depends on changing the styles so that every six months there's a new product on the supermarket shelves, or at least a "new" version of the old. New car models generate new excitement, even if it's all a matter of moving the molding or reshaping the tail-lights. New fashions mean the old ones are out, and woe be to the person who shows his "nerdity" by wearing a tie too thin or a collar too wide.

Fascination with the newest and latest is as old as humanity. Homer declared in his *Odyssey* that "It is always the latest song that an audience applauds the most." Dr. Luke says something of the same about the ancient Athenians in Acts 17:21: They "spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas."

Fear

But the fad of the new often creates a reactionary fear in those of us who want something deeper in our lives. "Nothing quite new is perfect," said the Roman statesman Cicero; and we're inclined to agree. "Be not the first by whom the new are tried," cautioned Alexander Pope. Again we nod our heads.

Abraham Lincoln once addressed his nation and pulled many heartstrings when he said, "What is conservatism? Is it not adherence to the old and tried, against the new and untried?" We've often used that argument ourselves, haven't we?

The ancient Jewish writer of Ecclesiasticus even applied that fear of the new human relationships. "forsake not an old friend," he said, "for the new is not comparable to him; a new friend is as a new wine; when it is old, thou shalt drink it with pleasure" (9:10).

Fulfilment

But the fear of the worst in new things can sometimes blind us to the best that is yet to come. Near the end of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Miranda shouts with joy at the beauty of the world that is opening to her. "How beauteous mankind is!" she cries. "O brave new world, that hath such people in't!" And our thoughts immediately take her innocent rapture and recast it in the dark shades of Huxley's stolen title for a horrible *Brave New World* where science and technology and totalitarian government join unholy hands to bind human hearts and kill human spirits. Will the "new" do that to us? We pray it won't while we fear it might.

Still, says the psalmist, not all the new is bad, nor all the future dismal. "sing to the Lord a new song!" The old songs won't do. The remnants of another time can't express our feeling today. The melodies of greatness are ever-changing, and only a new song will echo all that we see and sense of the fulfilment of the glory of God at work in our world.

And if God's love, God's care, God's delight fills this world so fully, it'll flood even "a new heaven and a new earth" with the ever-New Song of his people.

Wayne Brouwer is a pastor at First Christian Reformed Church in London, Ont.

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